THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 14 June, 1932 Number 6

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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Book Reviews

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - Page 339
A CRITICAL HOUR
By R. P. D.

The War Front in the East - - - „ 356
By J. R. SHANLEY

Ottawa and the Drive to War - - - „ 362
By H. RATHBONE

The Miners' Fight for Seven Hours - - „ 369
By ED. LAUGHLIN

The First Bolshevik Workers' Daily - - „ 377
By STEPHEN GARRY

Mr. Wells Shows His Class - - - „ 383
By D. S. MIRSKY

Medicine in the Service of the Bourgeoisie - „ 388
I. A Further Contribution *By* E. A. FIDLER
II. A Reply *By* DAVID I. FROST

Book Reviews - - - - - - „ 395
A Revolutionary Attitude to Religion *By* J.Y.
An Insoluble Problem—for Capitalism *By* E.B.
An Italian Traitor Surveys his Handiwork *By* T.B.
Potemkin and Invergordon *By* LEN WINCOTT

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

A Critical Hour—" Waterloo "—World Starvation—Capitalism's Outcome—Cuts and Disease—No Constructive Solution —The Destructive Solution—War—Moves to Inflation —Governmental Support ? — Whither ? — Labour-I.L.P. Complacency — Cheap Credits and War — Papal Encyclical — A Direct Call to War — Social Democracy and War Crisis—Concealment as " Asiatic " Issue—Britain-France as War Leaders — Lausanne — Zero Hour.

THE menace of the world situation grows daily greater. We are now entering the decisive months of the present war crisis, which is itself the culminating stage of the capitalist crisis. The offensive which world capitalism, in growing desperation at the failure of every effort to find a path from its straits, is planning to launch against the workers' socialist republic, and thereby against socialism and the working class movement throughout the world, is aimed for the summer months, the most favourable for attack, both from the side of Japan and from the West. The diplomatic stage is set for all the issues to converge into these summer months : the Lausanne Conference, gathering the European Imperialist Powers to endeavour to reach their common front ; the Ottawa Empire Conference, whose war character becomes increasingly open ; the culmination of the Geneva Disarmament Conference, whose strategic and war character is even more open ; the change of governments in France and Germany, which, whether to the left in the one case, or to the right in the other, alike prepare the ground for the approach to war. Alongside the complex and semi-veiled movements in diplomacy and high politics, the crude drive to war, the press propaganda of economic antagonism, national self-sufficiency, empire patriotism and war-preparedness, and especially the anti-Soviet crusade of lies and calumnies and incitements, blare at full blast, with direct governmental encouragement and inspiration. Repression against the working class movement is intensified ;

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in Britain the fourteen hundred political prosecutions of workers since the formation of the National Government exceed all records save the direct period of the general strike. Open violence, going beyond the state forms of the bourgeois dictatorship and infecting the whole of political life, become more and more the order of the day throughout the capitalist world, whether as revealed in Hitlerism in Germany, or in the assassinations by fascist reactionaries in France or Japan. All these symptoms of bourgeois demoralisation, alike economically and politically, point to the desperate character of the struggle which is in front, in which capitalism is preparing to stake all on the issue.

As the Duke of Wellington said at Waterloo, this is going to be "a damned close thing" between the survival and the decline of civilisation.

WITH these words, widely quoted, a leading Conservative politician, Sir Robert Horne, gave expression to the prevailing sentiment in the capitalist camp. These words have a certain appropriateness which goes beyond what the speaker may have intended. He sees a supreme battle now approaching, a "Waterloo," in which "civilisation" is to survive or go under. What is this "civilisation" which is to survive or go under? For the speaker, the "civilisation" which is to survive or go under in the approaching battle is property civilisation, is capitalist society, which has brought mankind to the present abyss, which has turned wholesale plenty to wholesale starvation, which has destroyed the fruits of science and invention, and is now preparing to save its rotten structure by wholesale slaughter for the destruction of the future society. The "Waterloo" to which he looks forward is to repeat the role of the historical Waterloo, the role of the monarchical restoration, of the Holy Alliance, of Europe in chains and the triumph of the counter-revolution. But in fact what triumphed through Waterloo was not primarily the dead puppet, Louis XVIII, but the then ascending force of British capitalism, which proved itself

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stronger and riper for world leadership than the still insufficiently developed French capitalism. To-day the descending force is capitalism, in open and confessed bankruptcy and rottenness. The cause of civilisation, of human culture, of technical and social advance, which is being strangled and crushed by capitalism, is the cause of the working class, of the Soviet Union, of socialism, which can alone liberate the forces of development, and which is now entering on the supreme battle against death and destruction. And it is for us to see that the Waterloo which will be reached in the coming war shall be the Waterloo of capitalism.

LOOK round at the capitalist world to-day. Hunger and disease advance on every side. In America

> Over 40 million persons are now living below the minimum standard of health.

This is the statement of the bulwark of capitalism, the American Federation of Labour. In Britain

> People are starving.

This is the statement of the leading British capitalist politician, Lloyd George, in his speech of March 16.

> A million people, or one-seventh of the population of New York City, are now dependent on charity. Relief funds are practically exhausted.
>
> Bread riots and widespread disorder are predicted unless bold steps are taken to remove the immediate threat of starvation. The trouble may begin to-morrow.
>
> Hospitals report that scores of patients are suffering from malnutrition and that at least a score have died from actual starvation.

This is the statement of the New York correspondent of the Conservative *Daily Telegraph* (April 25, 1932).

> What was really most needed was food. Mothers were suffering from under-nourishment. It is our considered opinion that even as a bare maintenance-level standard benefit in this area is failing to maintain families adequately. The fact is, standard benefit has never been adequate, but it has been eked out by one family helping another. Now that the means test has taken pensions, &c., into account, this has become impossible.

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This is the report of the Newcastle clergy committee of inquiry, signed by the Archdeacon of Northumberland and others.

THESE reports, by bulwarks of capitalism, do not come from famine areas. They do not come from the impoverished and despoiled colonial continents, where the peoples, under the blessings of imperialism's civilising mission, live as skeletons and die in millions without ever reaching old age. They do not come from the devastated regions of Central Europe, where the blessings of a democratic peace have exacted their tribute and executed their scientific wrecking work. They come from the wealthiest centres of capitalism, from the victor imperialist countries, from Britain and America, to which the profits and tribute flow from all the world. This is the final working out to which the rule of capital has brought the human race, in the midst of powers of production released by science and labour without equal in history. It will be difficult for after-ages to believe the truth of this most shameful period in human history.

FACED with such catastrophe, it might be thought the first action of sane men would be to organise the immeasurable powers of production to meet the desperate and urgent needs of all. But to think this would be to ignore the class basis on which society is organised. The first thought of the ruling capitalist class is and can only be how to save their class rule, how to save their capital, how to save the profit system, which has inevitably led to this outcome. Production must be set going again, but only on condition that it can be made profitable. Until then, and to reach this, the masses must be driven further down. Cuts and economy are the order of the day. The cuts of last autumn, the tariffs, are not enough. More cuts must be imposed. The National Government, the Government of the MacDonalds, Snowdens, Samuels and Baldwins, humane enlightened philanthropists all, " socialists," liberals, democrats and Christians, carrying forward the work already begun by the Labour Government,

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ordains that, to help to provide the hundreds of millions for the bondholders and profiteers, the sickness benefit of married women must be cut down from 12s. to 10s. a week, and the total disablement from 7s. 6d. to 5s. And the ground for this? The ground for this is officially stated to be that sickness has increased, that the sickness claims of married women have increased in recent years by no less than 42 per cent. This fact is not brought forward as an alarming indication of the health of the nation, but as a ground for diminishing the provision for health. The situation here revealed is in full agreement with the picture given by Dr. Frost in his article in the LABOUR MONTHLY for March, where he showed, on the basis of the last Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, how between 1925 and 1930 (*before*, that is, the most desperate stage of the crisis and cuts) the incidence of what is politely called "malnutrition" among school children had increased by over 11 per cent., while "deformities and crippling disorders" has increased by 35 per cent. This is a terrible revelation of the ravages the capitalist crisis is making in the health of the workers; and the heavier crisis and ruthless cuts of the past two years will have carried this forward to a still more desperate degree. What is the answer of capitalism? The answer of capitalism (voiced by the humane MacDonald from his expensive nursing home) is: Sickness is increasing? Then cut down the provision for sickness. This is the logic of capitalism.

WHAT, then, is the perspective which capitalism sees before it for the issue from the crisis? No constructive solution is possible, because any constructive solution requires the abolition of the property basis which prevents the organisation of production for use. Production can only be allowed, so far as it yields a profit; the workers can only be allowed to take part in production, and win their pittance from it, provided it yields a profit for their masters. But how to make production at present capacity profitable, when the masses throughout the world, outside the Soviet

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Union, are impoverished, and increasingly impoverished by capitalism, while the enormous modern productive capacity requires enormous markets? Against this problem all the capitalist politicians and economists break their heads without end, and fall into a thousand infantile fallacies. No constructive solution (*i.e.*, harmonious utilisation of the powers of production) is possible within capitalism. There remains only the destructive solution; and along the path of the destructive solution, in ever-deepening abysses, as the crisis extends, capitalism has to proceed, and all the statesmen of capitalism, whether they call themselves conservatives, liberals, fascists or social democrats, have inevitably to proceed in a parallel and competitive tempo.

WHAT is the destructive solution? First, in its most simple and literal sense, the destruction of human labour, alike of the material products of labour and of living labour; destruction of plant and of consumption goods, limitation of production, chronic large-scale unemployment. This is the first and elementary character of the crisis. But this alone is not enough. Limitation requires agreement, and world competition continually wrecks any stable or universal agreement; while chronic large-scale unemployment throws a heavy burden on the profitableness of the remaining industry still carried on, and seriously weakens competitive power. The demand grows up to diminish the burdens of unemployment (that is, to throw a heavier proportion on to the workers) and to pursue a more active policy for the conquest of the market. Every Power tries by ever-heavier wage cuts, economy, tariffs, price-wars, and, finally, currency wars, to win for itself a larger share of the limited markets. International antagonisms enormously increase. This is the second stage of the destructive solution, through which we have been passing.

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BUT this also is not enough. The offensive of every Power is met by the offensive of every Power. Tariffs are met by tariffs, wage cuts by wage cuts. The net effect is no solution. After all, the desperate measures of the National Government, unemployment is revealed as again increasing in the latest figures. Something more is needed. The search becomes desperate for new markets. Each Power seeks to force its way into the preserves of the other Powers. The international antagonisms force forward the issue of the redistribution of the world, that is, the issue of war. The second stage passes into the third stage. The most desperately placed Imperialist Power, Japan, breaks first into the adventure of war. This erruption only lays bare and focuses all the imperialist antagonisms. The still incompletely conquered colonial market, China, where the masses are fighting for their liberation, is eagerly looked for as the spoils by every Power. But the issue extends further. For the distinctive feature of the present crisis is the parallel existence for the first time of a focus of socialism in construction over a large territory of the earth, which remains outside the crisis of capitalism. Here is the common point of hostility of all the Powers of capitalism in crisis. And here at the same time is the unconquered market, the dream of whose conquest draws all capitalism as the solution of the crisis. *Thus at the same time as the antagonisms of the imperialist Powers grow strongest and press to war, the drive to war of imperialism turns above all into the drive to war on the Soviet Union.* The final culmination of the path of capitalism for the destructive solution of the crisis stands revealed.

SIGNIFICANT of the new driving forces of the situation is the rising wave towards inflation in both America and Britain. The monetary question is now increasingly pushed to the front as the heart of the crisis, all the more as the old favourite issue of debts and reparations has now been fully exposed as not the cause of the crisis, since a year's complete stoppage has brought no relief, but instead increase

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of the crisis. Unable to touch the real issue, the class monopoly of the means of production, the bourgeois economists and politicians begin increasingly to turn all their forces and criticism on the monetary system as the cause of the paralysis, like a sick man attacking the image of his sickness in the mirror. If there were more money, more credit, about, then there would be more buying, prices would be higher, and industry would prosper. The fall in prices is seen, not as the reflection of the crisis, but as the cause of the crisis; the cure is thus simply presented as to raise prices to the level of 1928 or 1929 (in face of the fact that the mass of people are too poor to buy at present prices), and all will be well. This is the elementary infantile reasoning presented. But behind this nonsense lie more solid reasons of the powerful financial groups pressing it; and it is the moves of these groups, which begin to take on a governmental character, that are important.

IN the United States we have the "reflation" or "controlled inflation" policy, already partially indicated in the Glass-Steagall Act; the proposals of Owen D. Young and "men of great eminence in the industrial and financial world" for a Federal Bond issue of two thousand million dollars; the propaganda of Borah against "the gold mentality," &c. In Britain we have in addition to the previous McKenna-Blackett plus Labour-I.L.P. propaganda, the new Churchill-Horne offensive in the House of Commons, backed by the Beaverbrook press with the open demand for "inflation"; and in addition the partial welcome now for the first time expressed by the Government, and by official City and Treasury expression. Replying to Sir Robert Horne for the Government, Major Elliott declared on May 9:

> In order that there might be no mistake he would say that the Government desired to see a rise in wholesale prices in this country and, although not to the same extent, a rise in retail prices.

How was this to be effected? Partly by tariffs, partly by keeping down the pound, and partly by

> the provision of cheap and abundant supplies of money.

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This is the first indication of a line of Government policy likely to be of immense importance for the situation. At the same time the *Times* City Editor writes (April 11, 1932):

> By common consent the simplest and best solution of the world's economic troubles would be to organise if possible a subtantial rise in prices.

And the *Economist* opens out a series of articles on "Factors in Recovery (May 7, 1932):

> premising the desirability of a rise of, say, 30 per cent. in the level of wholesale prices.

Further talk is thrown out of a Bank of England policy under contemplation for cheap credits to business. At the same time we may note the French Government's new bonds issue of three thousand million francs (£24 millions), the first since the stabilisation of the franc four years ago. In Germany the Hitlerite and Hugenberg propaganda presses against the Brüning line for a line of inflation.

WHAT lies behind this new wave of policy? Something more is here involved than the familiar inflation swindle for the further driving down of wages and robbing of the workers and petit-bourgeoisie. A simple inflation swindle no longer in the present situation could meet the needs of capital; the previous McKenna-Keynes propaganda has always met with a cold reception in official quarters. For, while it is easy to speak airily of cheap credit and rising prices as the grand solution of the crisis, and nothing more appears needed to the "cheap money" quacks of the Labour and I.L.P. propagandists' type, the actual process is not so simple. As the *Times* City Editor, dealing with the desirability of a rise in prices, and the propaganda of cheap credit as the means to this, had to declare (May 12, 1932):

> Cheap and abundant credit is not enough. It only becomes effective when there is confidence and opportunity to use it profitably.

"Opportunity to use it profitably." Just there is the rub. If there is no market at the other end, then, however low the

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rate of interest, it is no help to the manufacturer. There is no basis either to lend or borrow. Despite all the liberal-reformist prophecies of prosperity by going off gold and lowering the Bank Rate, to-day, with the pound off gold, and a 2½ per cent. Bank Rate, the crisis remains as obstinate as ever.

WHAT, then, lies behind these signs of a move-over of governmental and official policy to a cheap credit line? To the Labour and I.L.P. pundits there is no difficulty in the answer; the well-intentioned, but slow-witted, high authorities have at last been convinced of the folly of their ways and converted to the light and the gospel, as preached by the I.L.P. Thus the I.L.P. journalist and former Labour Minister, Tom Johnston, writes in the I.L.P. journal *Forward* (May 14, 1932) under the heading "A Bank of England Director Talks Sense," and quotes with rapture the statements of Sir Basil Blackett. But then he comes to a difficulty and raises the awkward question: "Why do the Tories Back Him?"

> Now that's the talk we like to hear from the Bank of England.
>
> But
>
> Why are the chief Tory mandarines backing that man for Parliament?
>
> Why did they run him against the local Tory nominee at Marylebone?
>
> Why did Sir Robert Horne, and Mr. Amery, and Sir Austen Chamberlain go down to speak for him?

At this point it might be thought that even an I.L.P. journalist might begin to think, or at least to doubt the possibility of convincing his readers further. But not Tom Johnston. He has his answer ready. He announces in triumphant conclusion of his article:

> Wisdom dawns at last upon a sorely stricken land.

The Labour Party and I.L.P. leaders remain faithful to their task of running at the tail of the policy of finance-capital and passing it on to the masses in "popular" form for their applause.

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THE working class movement, however, will not so easily accept the new philanthropic role of the Bank of England and Sir Austen Chamberlain. If there is an increasing move in official quarters evident towards a cheaper credit policy, there must be solid reasons for it. The credit must be for a purpose. Otherwise the old dilemma of "opportunity to use it profitably" remains. What is that purpose? Where is that "profitable" direction? That is the real question. The prospect does not lie in the economic situation, in the trading situation, which grows worse. There is only one direction in which it can lie in the present situation. That direction is already indicated by all the factors of the situation. That direction is War. War is the supreme destructive activity of capitalism which can provide a seemingly limitless market, which can absorb limitless credits, which can raise prices and revive profits, which can utilise the productive power, not to supply human need, but to yield rich profits through slaughter and annihilation. Here all the conflicting tendencies of capitalism find their momentary solution. To this direction all the forces of capitalism increasingly turn. *The financial signs, no less than the diplomatic signs, no less than the armaments signs, no less than the signs of press propaganda, all point to war.* And the Labour Party, with the blood of the last war still upon it, already hastens forward to speed the process.

LET us note another sign of direction from a different quarter. A new Papal Encyclical is announced, with the pacific and innocent title "Caritate Christi Compulsi." The role of the Papacy in the period of imperialist decay is a significant one. In the period of ascending capitalism, the hold of the Papacy was actively weakened by the rising bourgeoisie as an out-dated form of exploitation and parasitism which was only a fetter to its growth. But in the decay of capitalism, when capitalism itself becomes counter-revolutionary, the aspect changes; putrescence calls to putrescence; the great reconciliation takes place. The vultures and jackals of counter-revolution draw close together;

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the Pope wins increasing diplomatic status, and becomes the banner-bearer of the international reaction, doing all the dirtiest work for imperialism. To-day the Papacy is financially sustained, for the main half of its income, apart from the allowance from Fascism, by American capital; it advances in alliance with the bloody gangs of Italian Fascism; in Germany it assists Hitlerism to power. Its utterances become significant political utterances of the policy of imperialism in its most reactionary forms, more open than the bourgeois-democratic politicians dare to express. Last year we had the encyclical banning socialism—with the significant proviso, as officially explained, that parties such as the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party were not regarded as socialist. This year, and at this moment, the banner-bearer of world-reaction comes out into the open with a direct call to action.

AFTER a few customary deceitful references to "speculators" with "enormous wealth" causing "enormous harm to the masses" in "the accursed hunger for gold," &c. (this is the familiar line of fascist propaganda), the Pope gets to business and launches the direct attack on the Communists by name as "the enemies of social order," "diabolical" enemies of God no less than of mankind," &c. So far, this is only their familiar propaganda on behalf of their stock-in-trade and source of profit, God. But the attack is not limited to propaganda. The attack—and this is the significant point at the present moment—is concentrated into a *direct call for combined international action.* Under the heading "Call for United Action," the *Times* prominently prints the message (May 19, 1932):

> CALL FOR UNITED ACTION.
>
> The Pope accordingly calls upon all the nations to put aside all base egoism and to unite all their forces in a single front against the battalions of evil, enemies of God no less than of mankind.

The "nations" are to "unite all their forces in a single front." Lest there should be any misunderstanding that this applies

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only to the "Christian" capitalist states, and not to all capitalist imperialist states, a proviso is carefully added:

> Although those who glory in the name of Christ should be the first in this union of minds and strength, let those likewise loyally aid who still believe in God and adore him.

The reference here is not difficult to see. Let *non-Christian* states no less than Christian states join in this modern crusade for the suppression of the revolution. In other words, *may Japan let loose the war, and Christian Europe follow up in unity with Japan.* Finally, lest there be any misunderstanding that only moral weapons are intended, the addition is made:

> In this combat for religion and social peace all legitimate human weapons must be used.

"All legitimate human weapons"—that is, bombs, tanks, guns and poison gas. The call of this crafty holy humbug in the name of "the love of Christ" is open and direct—more open than any of the language of diplomacy. It is the signal of the whole line of imperialism.

BUT a short while ago it was still possible for the warnings of the menace of world war, and of imperialist attack on the Soviet Union, to be dismissed by the bourgeois and social democratic press as Communist propaganda. Only two months ago the organ of German Social Democracy, *Vorwarts*, could write (March 29, 1932):

> The Communist Party in Germany is doing its best to divert the attention of the true believers in Germany by telling them something about an acute danger of intervention against the Soviet Union. The Central Committee is trying to hold its members by telling them the fairy story of a threatening war of intervention.

That was two months ago. To-day the whole press, capitalist and social democratic alike, is full of the menace of war arising from Japanese attack on the Soviet Union. As always, *after* events, after the preparatory work of imperialism has been done and the point of conflagration is reached, publicity is allowed to begin to dribble out. But until then, so long as the action of the masses could have checked the Japanese establishing their hold in Manchuria with the aid of Western

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Imperialism and thus broken the menace of the attack at its outset, so long there was only silence and soothing syrup and mild exhortations to the League and pooh-poohing of Communist propaganda. Now the *Daily Herald* comes out with a three-column article of Kenworthy on "The Shadow of War over Asia" (May 13, 1932):

> It would be a miracle if the war could be confined to the two original belligerents. Such a war could not be limited, but would most probably lead to a long-drawn-out struggle involving nation after nation.

And its main editorial of May 18 returns to "Danger in the East"—only to end in the old exhortations to the League of Nations, that is, to the imperialist war alliance.

BUT the line remains misleading as ever, not only in its policy, in its direct opposition to all mass action which can alone check war, in its preaching of trust in the imperialist war alliance which is actively preparing the war, but in its whole presentation of the situation. Not the actual war of Japanese Imperialism in China already in progress for eight months, already the enemy to be fought, is presented, but only the "danger" of the next stage, inseparably connected with the first, of the direct war on the Soviet Union. And how is this "danger" presented? It is presented as a "danger" of war between two states in Asia, "danger in the East," which may "involve" other nations, including the peace-loving Britain. *In this way the whole situation is turned upside down, in order to deceive the workers.* For the first fact that concerns the working class is that this is a war of world imperialism on the working class, on Socialism, on the workers' republic, which is being prepared to be let loose through Manchuria in the first place, in order then to be let loose on every front. The second fact is that *the threads of the war plot run direct to London, Paris and Geneva*, that these are the real "menace to peace," and not any simple "local conflict in Asia," and that *the seeming "independence" of the activity of Japanese Imperialism is in reality most heavily dependent, both diplomatically and materially, on the support of Western*

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Imperialism, and in particular of Britain and France. Without this support, the war could never have reached its present point, nor could it extend further. And the third fact is that the war is being prepared, not merely in Manchuria, but *directly in Europe* on the Western borders of the Soviet Union, under French hegemony, and in the Middle East, under British hegemony. These are the essential facts of the situation which the social democratic press, even when the question of the war has now become open and publicly urgent, still exerts all its efforts to conceal.

THE European Imperialist Powers are now to meet in conference at Lausanne under British-French hegemony. Within a few weeks is due to follow the Ottawa Empire Conference, drawing together the Empire grouping outside Europe under British hegemony for consultation and common decision. The stage is set for the widest common decisions and action, if the situation in Manchuria will have meanwhile advanced to the point of war. The previous conferences, the endless meetings of the past three months, now in Paris, now in London, now in Geneva, of MacDonald-Tardieu, of MacDonald-Brüning, of Stimson's visit, have prepared the ground under cover of a thick veil of secret diplomacy, but not without intelligible hints from the diplomatic correspondents of certain " urgent questions " other than the ostensible business that have been discussed " informally " (*Times*, May 5, 1932 on the MacDonald-Tardieu meeting, *Manchester Guardian* on the same, New York *Nation* May 11, 1932, on the real purpose of the Stimson visit as in relation to the Far Eastern situation, and similar references). What is the business of the Lausanne Conference? Ostensibly, the question of debts and reparations. But the question of debts and reparations is itself only a counter for deeper issues. It is common ground that there is no question of the possibility of payment from Germany in the immediate future; the question as such is only a hypothetical question of the further future. But behind the

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question lie other issues and antagonisms, the relations of Germany to Britain and France, to the Versailles Treaty, to the anti-Soviet bloc, the relations of the European Powers to the United States.

THE question of Germany is the crux and focussing point, alike for the issue of revolution and counter-revolution in Europe, and for the anti-Soviet offensive. Without the effective participation of Germany, without the crushing down of the German working class, the anti-Soviet offensive cannot count on success. The advance of Fascism in Germany develops parallel with the advance of the anti-Soviet offensive. German Imperialism demands the right to arm on an equality as the price of participation. This issue of arming becomes the central theme of the " Disarmament " Conference, which has now turned down the final Soviet reduction of armaments proposals and thereby revealed its opposition to any reduction, and its real role in the preparing of war. British Imperialism supports the arming of Germany ; it seeks thereby to build the European bloc, that is, the anti-Soviet bloc, under its own hegemony, with Germany an effective counterpoise to France. French Imperialism seeks still to hold Germany under and disarmed, as passive lines of communication between France and its Eastern allies, and to build the anti-Soviet bloc on the Versailles basis. Meanwhile in Germany the ground is prepared. Hindenburg-Brüning on the one side, and Hitler on the other, draw steadily closer in the advance to fascism, with Social Democracy as the decoy to confuse the workers' opposition and cover the advance. Hitlerism openly offers its services, once victorious, to Western Imperialism for the anti-Soviet offensive. At the same time in France the ground is correspondingly prepared. The May elections, with the " Left " victory, draw off through a safety-valve the discontent and anti-war sentiments of the masses to effective support of French Imperialism, with the Socialist Party once again as the decoy ; the new " Left " Government stands pledged from the outset to the continuance

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of the programme of Tardieu. The elections of May, 1932, in France, bear an ominous resemblance to the elections of May, 1914, which also yielded a " Left " majority, whose rôle proved to be to lead to war. At a hundred points the whole European situation, and the whole world situation, reveal the advance to war and the threatenings of explosion.

THIS is the menacing situation which confronts the working class in every country in the world. All the international antagonisms press to exploding point. Dominating all, the anti-Soviet offensive of imperialism reaches visibly its zero hour, with the situation in Manchuria as the conflagration point, and with British and French Imperialism organising the front on a world scale. Japanese Imperialism as the forerunner has carried through its aggression without effective check. Imperialism is preparing its next move. Only the action of the workers can counter that move. There is no need to emphasise the urgency of the situation. The only question is to exert every effort to bring the full force of the working class into action at the present stage of the war crisis already developed, before a yet more extreme stage has been reached. The sands are running out.

R. P. D.

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THE WAR FRONT IN THE EAST

By J. R. SHANLEY

" In our wars with Russia and the United States we must insist upon Manchuria and Mongolia bearing all the horrors of War." (*Tanaka Memorandum.*)

JAPANESE secret imperialistic ambitions of 1927 are the realities of 1932. Manchuria is " bearing all the realities of war." The Tanaka Memorandum envisaged the prospect that Japan would go forward, with the " resources " of China at its disposal, to the conquest of Asia, India, " and even Europe." Yet, despite these ambitions and the immediate conflict of imperialist interests in China the Japanese invasion of Manchuria goes forward with the scarcely concealed support of all the great imperialist powers and of the League of Nations. Why ?

Because the existence of the U.S.S.R. is a greater menace to all Imperialisms than the ambitions of Japan. Further, with the U.S.S.R. shattered, Imperialism would feel free to fight out its internal antagonisms without the danger of Revolution. The overthrow of the Soviets would unleash the forces of imperialist ambitions and antagonisms, would heap the horrors of imperialist wars on the bestialities of counter-revolution. The intensity of the crisis relentlessly forces capitalism to seek war as a solution, but, in the words of Marx, they are haunted by the " spectre of communism."

The fatherland of the Revolution must be destroyed. Therefore the unity of all imperialist powers, despite their antagonisms to aid Japan in the preparation of the war front in the East !

Japanese Aims in Manchuria

Japanese preparations for the seizure of Manchuria go back over a long period. In August, 1927, Baron Tanaka called to a Conference the Japanese Minister in Pekin and all the Japanese Consuls in China. After the conference a statement was issued which, after the usual preamble about non-interference, threatened intervention if " agitators " and " unruly " elements were not suppressed in Manchuria. To-day the seizure is an accomplished fact. Japan controls Manchuria almost to the borders of the U.S.S.R. From the *Morning Post* to Lees-Smith and the Rono-Tai-Suto (Left Wing Social Democratic Party of Japan) there is a shout that this is not " imperialism," but the " solution of Japan's national problem." But a United Press Telegram from Tokyo,

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quoted by the Chinese *Weekly Review*, reveals how far the invasion is in the cause of " national liberation."

" *It is no secret that the plans of the General Staff in Tokyo have always pointed to operations on the Asiatic mainland and that a section of the military opinion has favoured striking Russia before the Soviet industrial programme has advanced to a point where victory for Japanese arms would be doubtful.*

" *Many leaders of the Japanese army believe they could at this time defeat the Soviet easily and could occupy and hold Siberian maritime provinces and the Amur valley. If the Russian industrialisation continues for a few years more, however, success would be impossible for the Japanese armies.*"

Further evidence of the real nature of Japanese aims can be gathered from the following quotation from the New York *Herald Tribune* of February 26, 1932 : " the first attack will be started under the direction of the White Guardist General Kosmin against the maritime province of which Vladivostok, the Pacific port, is the principal city." The Baltimore *Sun* stated that the concentration of the Japanese fleet within striking distance of Vladivostok had been kept secret in Japan but had been confirmed by the Washington naval authorities. The New York *Times* of February 23 stated that " well-informed foreign diplomatic circles " accept the statement that the Manchurian invasion was not directed against China, but was " the first step in the defensive expansion " against the U.S.S.R.

Despite these clearly-defined aims of Japan, General Tamon, in an interview, declared that 100,000 men would be required to clear Manchuria of " bandits " and accused the U.S.S.R. of hampering this work by its refusal to allow the use of the Chinese Eastern Railway for the transport of Japanese troops to Pogranitchnaya on the borders of Russian territory.

There are now six divisions of Japanese troops in Manchuria and the *Manchester Guardian* plays its part by declaring that these reinforcements " give point to General Tamon's declaration and that it would take even this large force two or three years to accomplish this task."

It would be false to conclude from the above events that the Manchurian invasion arose out of the ambitions of Japan alone, or that the European Imperialist Powers have played only a passive or covering-up role. Japan's freedom of action arises from the fact that her ambitions coincide with and develop the plans of European and American imperialism to crush the U.S.S.R.

Britain in December and January supplied £45,000 of arms and ammunition to Japan and a further £40,496 in April ; great quantities have also been transhipped from Belfast. The *Daily Worker* of May 7

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reported a visit of Japanese representatives to the Woolwich Arsenal, foreshadowing further orders: 20 tanks and 4,000 heavy aeroplane bombs were ordered from France, and America has supplied $180,000,000 of arms and ammunition.

The Japanese paper *Arzala*, writing on the assassination of President Doumer, said that "France has since the beginning of the Manchurian incident shown a complete understanding of the Japanese policy in Manchuria and in return France has enjoyed Japanese support in International politics."

In reply to a question by G. Lansbury on March 22 regarding the new Manchurian State set up by Japan, Sir John Simon replied:

"At the same time there is no law and there is no commonsense in saying that in no conceivable circumstances can there be a sub-division of an enormous area like China, for as a matter of fact the rising in this province or that of an administration claiming to have a certain amount of independence is by this time a commonplace in Chinese matters and I have never heard the matter challenged before."

The British Government thus supports Japan and seeks to conceal the real character of the invasion.

It is clear that military, diplomatic and ideological support is being given to Japan by world imperialism to achieve the consolidation of the war front in the East against the U.S.S.R.

The Role of the League of Nations

China "unreservedly" placed its case in the hands of the League of Nations on September 19, 1931. That is bourgeois Koumintang China, for the workers and peasants in the Soviet areas and even outside are still strenuously resisting Japanese aggression.

On September 30, the League passed a resolution asking both parties "to refrain from aggravating the situation" and then adjourned for a fortnight, during which time the Japanese continued their advance and consolidated their position in South Manchuria while the Koumintang began to slaughter the workers who continued the anti-Japanese boycott.

On October 24 the League asked Japan to withdraw her troops into the railway zone, but granted permission to proceed against bandits. The Council then adjourned for three weeks. On the day the Council was re-convened the Japanese were fighting along the Taonan-Anganchi railway and on November 18 they occupied Tsitsihar and sat astride the Chinese Eastern Railway. The Japanese informed the League of Nations that it was the "momentum" of the drive against the bandits that had taken them to Tsitsihar. At a later stage the New York *Herald Tribune* stated (March 7) that Japanese troops appear "to be moving

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towards " Pogranichnaya . . . where they will be within one mile of a serious clash if the ' momentum ' which General Honjo held accountable for the taking of Tsitsihar carries them over the frontier."

On December 10 the League Commission of Enquiry was created. Forty-six days elapsed before the League was re-convened. Three days after its resumption on January 25, the Japanese forces invaded Shanghai. Throughout the session of the League at Geneva, Chapei, Kiangswan and Woosung were being demolished by Japanese guns and bombs and thousands of civilians, including women and children were being murdered. China invoked Article XV. and on March 3 the League Assembly was convened to hear the case. A resolution was passed whereby both parties agreed to " do everything to bring hostilities to a halt." A Committee of nineteen was then established to handle the position. This Committee has now secured a truce in Shanghai, not in the interests of China, but to allow Japan to transfer troops to Manchuria where they are still meeting stubborn resistance. In addition to reinforcing Japan's position in Manchuria, the " truce " gives a legal cloak to an extension of imperialist control over Shanghai. Only the heroic defence of Shanghai by the 19th Army has prevented the League of Nations organising a " truce " giving sanction to a widespread partitioning of China.

It can therefore be clearly seen that every stage in the Note passing, adjournments, &c., of the League of Nations was paralleled by and co-related with an intensification of the Japanese military activity. It is clear that the League of Nations organised the invasion of Manchuria and Shanghai by directing Japanese activities along channels that would serve the general interests of the imperialists' attack on the U.S.S.R., while at the same time checking such Japanese activities as would be detrimental to the interests of other powerful imperialist groups. George Lansbury's outburst in the House of Commons about asking Japan to transfer the base of operations away from the International Settlement expressed in a child-like clumsy fashion the policy more astute capitalist politicians were operating secretly at the League. *The League of Nations is one of the imperialists' chief liaison and organising agencies in the preparation of the Eastern War Front.*

The Treachery of the Koumintang

What part did the Chinese bourgeoisie play in these movements. The events in Shanghai afford ample proof !

At the Second Plenary Session of the Koumintang, held at Loyang in March, Hsia Tau-pi, a member of the E.C. of the Koumintang, stated that the Fourth Army which could have saved Shanghai was deliberately held back by the Nanking Government, and that aeroplanes sent from Canton remained idle at Changsha, while the Japanese bombed Shanghai

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under orders from headquarters. Wang Pei-ling, another Koumintang official stated that two regiments already on their way to Shanghai, were held back at Chingkiang.

In the actual fighting the Koumintang was even more treacherous. On March 2, " reliable " troops were sent to disarm the soldiers who refused to obey the orders to retreat. Many refused to yield their rifles and continued the struggle against the Japanese : *these, in many instances, were shot by the Koumintang as " traitors."*

The military equipment, tanks, aeroplanes, &c., and the financial resources supplied to the Koumintang by the imperialist powers are obviously not to be used against the Japanese. Once more it is the preparation of the War Front in the East against the Russian and Chinese Soviets.

The Attack on the Chinese Soviets

The cowardice of the Koumintang in face of the Japanese invasion is in striking contrast to the determined efforts of the Chinese bourgeoisie to crush the Soviets.

At the end of 1930, Chang Kai Shek sent an army of 200,000 against the Chinese Soviets. This force was armed with the latest modern military weapons. But such was the power of the small Red Army of 22,000 men, through its contact with the masses of poor peasants, that it shattered this technically and numerically superior force and captured 5,500 rifles, 40 machine guns, 6 field guns and a huge supply of ammunition.

In March, 1931, the Koumintang launched a Second Communist Suppression Campaign, with over 400,000 men, foreign advisers, aeroplanes, &c. The Red Army, by this time 100,000 strong, inflicted an even more decisive defeat on this force.

A Third Communist Suppression Campaign was led by Chang Kai Shek himself in July, 1931, which was to " exterminate the Communists in one month." The fate of this force was reported in the New York *Times* of February 16, 1932 :

> It was in Kiangsi that Chiang Kai Shek's government waged a desperate anti-communist campaign last summer at a cost of 100,000 soldiers and civilian lives and more than $250,000,000. The attempt to defeat the Red Armies proved vain, despite deceptive official announcements from Nanking that the government had been victorious.

At the present time, after consultation with Japanese military leaders, the Koumintang is sending to Central China on a Fourth Communist Suppression Campaign the aeroplanes, artillery and brigades which Chang Kai Shek refused to send against the Japanese. While the generals have pilfered the money raised to defend Shanghai, have shot eleven wounded soldiers who demanded their five-months' back pay,

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Chang Kai Shek has bribed Chen Chi-lang, of Canton, with $800,000 to attack the Soviets across the Kwantung borders.

The Strength of the Soviets

Only the Chinese Soviets and the revolutionary workers and peasants still struggling under the terror of the Koumintang, aided by the revolutionary workers of every country, can break the war front in the East. What is the strength of their forces ?

On November 17, 1931, the fourteenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, the first China Soviet Congress was held in the Kiangsi province. Six hundred and ten delegates from nine provinces attended. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party which had carried on a long struggle to unite the scattered Soviets, the Congress established a Central Provisional Soviet Government. The Chinese Soviets now control one-sixth of the area of China, with a population of over 70,000,000. The Red Army is 150,000 strong and is supported by organised partisans numbering 200,000. Thirty-six per cent. of the Red Army are workers, fifty-seven per cent. peasants, the remainder being revolutionary intellectuals. Having already shattered and demoralised three Koumintang campaigns, there is little doubt that, with the support of the workers in the imperialist countries in the stopping of supplies of military equipment and munitions, they will shatter the fourth campaign.

Already, despite low industrial and economic forces, the Soviets have established the eight-hour day, have given the land to the poor peasants, abolished child labour and child marriage and increased wages from 50 per cent. to 300 per cent. over those paid while the White Guards were in power. The improvement in conditions varies from province to province according to the available resources.

But the forces of the Soviets and the revolutionary workers, especially of China and Japan, are the only forces fighting against the establishment of the imperialist war front in the East. Those who talk loud about what they will do if " Russia " is attacked, such as the leaders of the I.L.P., are helping the preparation of the war on Russia when they refuse to fight against the attacks on the Chinese Soviets and the Shanghai workers.

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OTTAWA AND THE DRIVE TO WAR

By H. RATHBONE

THE normal features of British Imperialist hypocrisy are now multiplying a hundredfold. This signifies the tremendous tension that is spreading to-day throughout the capitalist world. It signifies the terrific advance of the danger of a new world war following hard on the heels of the war now raging in the Far East. It signifies the mobilisation of the ideologues of capitalism for the mass hypocrisy of war propaganda.

The screaming lies and the revolting and bestial distortions of the gutter daily press all directed to provoke war on the Soviet Union, to prepare the war against the United States are paralleled by the smooth, oily and even more revolting hypocrisies of " respectable " journalism.

That permanent hypocrisy which represents the savage oppression that constitutes the British Empire as a Free Commonwealth of Nations is finding successor after successor. British Imperialism goes into the Lausanne Conference with an open programme of reparations' cancellation and the mobilisation of its fellow imperialist powers in Europe to unite with it in its demand off the U.S.A. that all War Debts owed that country or elsewhere should be cancelled.

But to the Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa next month it is going with a programme behind which is concealed the absolute opposite. For its objective at Ottawa is to ensure the payment to the uttermost farthing—and more—of the interest on the money invested by it in the Empire.

Already it has made plain that this is its objective. Mr. J. H. Thomas proclaims that the Treaty with the Irish Free State sanctified by the bomb and the bayonet of the Black and Tans, must be " honoured " for all time. In particular, Mr. Thomas bawls forth that full payment must be made of the money which the Irish peasantry are being forced to scrimp and scrape together from their year-in, year-out toil to buy out, forsooth, the land that once was theirs. The Land Annuities are sacred to the insolent British conquerors.

While Sir John Simon demands off America that all War Debts be cancelled, again it is left to his colleague in the National Government, Mr. Thomas, through his puppet, Governor Game, to sack the Premier of New South Wales, Lang, for daring to question the sacredness of the bonds and shares of British capitalists in Australia.

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British imperialism works up a lot of moral indignation over what it calls the disease of economic nationalism now spreading throughout the world. But to Ottawa it is going in order to consolidate the widest possible so-called " economic " nationalist grouping.

All the engines of British imperialist propaganda, all its scribblers and tame protagonists are now playing in multiple fashion this hypocritical game.

Speaking to America, we demand, they say, the cancellation of all debts. Speaking to the colonial possessions and Dominions, we demand, they repeat, the fullest payment on every debt.

They describe the rising tariff walls in countries abroad and their developing industries, as " this disease of economic nationalism." Yet the creation of a tariff wall round Britain and its extension round the whole of the Empire is but to achieve " National Security and Imperial Economic Co-operation."

This is indeed how the *Times* describes it. But as the following quotation shows this is not the limit of British Imperialism's aim. For in an editorial to welcome the passage by the Commons of the present tariff scheme as proposed by the Import Duties Advisory Committee, the *Times* said :

> No one pretends that the policy of beginning with national security going on to imperial co-operation, and ending with the formation of an economic unit far beyond the bounds of the political Empire, will be carried out easily ; but the existence and the actions of the Committee will facilitate rather than obstruct such a plan. (May 6.)

This line can only lead to war. Never was the direct connection between tariffs and war more clearly expressed. For what is the position in the world to-day ? Apart from the Soviet Union, the whole world is already divided up amongst the imperialist powers. The formation of an economic unit stretching " far beyond (*far* beyond, indeed !—H.R.) the bounds of the political empire " will mean not only closer consolidation of the countries under the sphere of British influence such as Portugal, Greece and Scandinavia but the extension of the British Empire to include countries where British capitalism owns only a partial interest, or even to countries where its interests are at present still very much in a minority.

But for all the *Times*' smooth and easy phrasing, this leading organ of British Imperialism knows perfectly well what it is about. Nevertheless it " will not be carried out easily," as it says. It knows perfectly well that the policy it has outlined will lead to war. But deliberately it calls upon its imperialist readers to take into consideration the approach of this new war for the repartition of the world.

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Yet with what appears to be but blazing hypocrisy it proclaims in a leading article but a few days later (May 6) that :

> The policy of economic isolation must be a sentence of disaster to the nations that attempt it and a peril to all.

But what lies behind this seeming merely hypocritical contradiction ? The editorial from which this quotation is taken is entitled " Unemployment and the World," and immediately before it, is the statement that " We are not suffering alone and we are very conscious in this country that we shall not recover by ourselves."

The contradiction becomes clear. British Imperialism has at least two war policies. In this editorial the *Times* speaks only about the crisis and unemployment in the capitalist world to save itself from " disaster."

In opposition to this crisis and growing unemployment in the capitalist world stands out the rapidly developing industry and *no* unemployment in the Soviet Union.

Behind the screaming provocation of the gutter press and the more subtle but equally dangerous appeals of " respectable " journalism the War Front against the Soviet Union is being pushed forward.

The war in the Far East is already flaming with Japan having the full support of British and French Imperialism in its predatory subjugation of Manchuria and provocatory operations along the frontier of the Soviet Union. The building of the War Front in the West, temporarily checked as a result of the breakdown of the Danube Plan is now being built afresh on a wider basis.

The press is full of countless statements by such as D'Abernon, Professor Cassel and Ormsby Gore, the First Commissioner of Works, to the effect that " the world is menaced with disaster " (D'Abernon) ; that it is " not a temporary crisis but a progressive destruction of the world monetary system " (Cassel) ; that " we are about to enter a phase of the crisis even more difficult and acute than any we had yet experienced " (Ormsby Gore).

Faced with this situation British Imperialism, the main lever behind that organiser of the war in the Far East, the League of Nations, is feverishly seeking to build up a united front against the Soviet Union in co-operation with its main rival, the United States, holding out the hope of the immense markets there that can be exploited.

Nevertheless, at the same time it is being driven by its own contradictions to intensify its war preparations *against* the United States.

Take Churchill, for instance, who was one of the first supporters of Protection outside the ranks of the traditional protectionists. In the

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House of Commons on May 10 he spoke on the question of the Sterling Bloc. But first, he said, speaking of the Disarmament Conference :

> . . . When a war of economic attrition was proceeding actively between all nations, when unrest and fear rules in so many lands . . . could they wonder that nations were unlikely to disarm, to destroy the weapons already paid for, or to reduce military forces or institutions which they may fear may play a part in protecting themselves against external enemies and which may add to their internal security ?

These remarks in justification of arming to the teeth were followed by an appeal to the Government to call a world conference with the United States in order to discuss the breakdown of the monetary system.

> " Only world action," he said, " could cure a world evil and no such action would be taken except with the co-operation of Great Britain and the United States with other strong Powers hastening to rally to their strong appeal."

Churchill, who fights aganist any disarmament, who welcomes tariffs which can but lead to war with the United States, nevertheless at the same time calls for co-operation with the United States. Such a seemingly contradictory action is in fact a call for action against the Soviet Union existing outside the area where this " world evil " is supposed to exist.

Meanwhile the economic position of the British Empire is also driving British Imperialism into War with the U.S.A., is compelling it to make a War Conference of the Imperial Conference at Ottawa.

Imperial Economic Co-operation, Empire Economic Unity with its driving force tariffs, is not intended as we have seen to mean merely a unity *within* the Empire, but is meant to characterise an economic grouping " far beyond " the Empire's " political bounds."

Behind the bludgeons, threats and bribes of British Imperialism in its dealings with the Dominions and its mass murder and torture in its dealings with the Colonies, lies the policy of this search for markets outside the British Empire. Ottawa is meant to organise this search.

The Federation of British Industries in its pamphlet on " Industry and the Empire," published last month in preparation for Ottawa, asserts that :

> The danger to the Empire lies in the fact that if the nations of the Empire decide, instead of co-operating, to stand alone, each one of them must eventually fall under the dominance of some foreign economic group, however attached they may be by sentiment to the Empire's ideal. (P. 5.)

The Federation of British Industries shows by this that British Imperialism is faced with the threat of the break up of the Empire. What can British Imperialism offer to the capitalists of the Dominions and even of India as a bribe to keep their countries under the domination of

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British Imperialism. A larger market for agricultural products in Britain? But answers the Dominions you will want in return that your industrial products shall enter our countries more freely. This we cannot allow except to a very limited extent, for we also are growing industrial nations. Besides, even if you exclude the agrarian products of those countries like Denmark and the Argentine altogether—and we don't expect you to do that—the market for agricultural products in Britain is not big enough for us. Thirdly, you might allow us a bigger share of the exploitation of the colonial market. Certainly this would be a more worth-while concession, but in the present condition of acute agrarian crisis and rising colonial revolt the value of even this is problematical.

The alternative is therefore for the Dominions to be invited to join with the British Imperialists in a search for new markets—in a new world war for the redivision of the world.

Thus it is no accident that more and more the sterling bloc that was previously only a threat is now artificial-wise being converted into a definite policy. British Imperialism follows its conversion to tariffs by its headlong adoption of the policy of the Sterling Bloc. This bloc aims at re-enforcing the tariff wall, aims at re-enforcing the admitted consequence of that policy the creation of an "economic" grouping "far beyond the political bounds of the Empire."

As Sir Clare Lees, the President of the British Chambers of Commerce, declared at its 72nd Annual Meeting:

> For years we have been struggling against the handicap of an overvalued pound sterling. It will take years for us to get back the trade we have lost. Our ability to recapture that trade depends on the value of the pound sterling being kept at a level which will enable us to compete in the markets of the world. (*Times*, April 22.)

The Federation of British Industries is even more definite about it. It makes the discovery that the pre-War Gold Standard was really a Sterling standard. Post-War British policy hitherto has been directed to trying to return to the Gold Standard. In present conditions that is admitted to be hopeless, though all the serious supporters of the Sterling Bloc admit themselves that a return to the Gold Standard must be the ultimate aim of British Capitalism. Therefore, while not completely repudiating gold, this report of the F.B.I. on a "New British Financial Policy" adopts almost the same phrasing as the *Times* did when advocating its species of Empire Economic Unity as quoted by us above. For this pamphlet says:

> Without waiting for the day when it will once again become practicable to envisage the possibility of a universal international monetary understanding, we must set to work at once to consolidate as large a group as practicable of countries, both within and outside the Empire, which are willing and able to co-operate with us in a system of mutual interchange and harmonious evolution.

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But just as in the case of tariffs any further extension of the Empire by drawing countries into its tariff system will inevitably lead to conflict with, for instance, the U.S.A., so with a Sterling Bloc. Both within and outside the Empire, British Imperialism seeks with the aid of the Sterling Bloc to ensure and to increase the value of its investments, over £4,000 millions in all. But in many countries in which these investments exist there are also investments held by opposing imperialisms such as the U.S.A. in South America. By drawing these countries into the Sterling Bloc, American exports would become restricted, while the revolt against the increased value of American investments in these countries would grow.

Here again we see that the Sterling Bloc is nothing but a means to try and extend the political rule of British Imperialism *beyond* the Empire, inevitably leading to a new world war for the repartition of the world.

Finally, every section of the bourgeoisie are proclaiming the need for a rise in prices, for a rise in world prices but in default a rise in prices within the Empire Economic Unit, the Sterling Bloc. Reflation, deflation, all sorts of words are used, but co-operation in raising prices at least by 30 per cent., as the *Economist* suggests, is proclaimed to be the aim.

Actually, unless by sheer headlong inflation, capitalism in the midst of its crisis of over-production and of an ever-narrowing market of impoverished workers and peasants, can by no manner of means reverse the downward course of the depression, till its over-production has been spent and the supply again begins to be less than the already restricted demand. How to achieve this, how to raise prices before their over-production has spent itself, lest the crisis overwhelm them, is a problem before British, as well as before every other, Imperialism.

Find new markets is the only reply. That well-tried bourgeois economist, Hartley Withers, himself comes up against this problem. After having gone through the whole gamut of patent remedies, inflation, reflation, more and cheaper money, he comes to his final conclusion with an article in the *Observer* of May 15 :

> It seems to be clear, therefore, that cheaper money may give further benefits to industry ; but there still remains the difficulty of finding markets.

That indeed is the question. Capitalism for all its " remedies," such as the inflationary experiments in America, accompanied by cheaper money (they are now going to try dearer money), mass confidence that prices will rise, yet prices continue to fall (confidence apparently is not the *only* thing required), goods keep on piling up and prices keep on falling with debts piling up, and bankruptcies overwhelming, with express speed, individuals, companies, towns, and whole countries.

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To this Imperial Conference at Ottawa, which is going to find a solution of this "difficulty of finding markets," by organising the Empire for a new war for the re-partition of the world, the Trades Union Congress has appointed its official delegates. It is no accident that this is so. Capitalism needs not only its direct supporters but also its lackeys in the working class movement to prosecute this new world war. The Trades Union Congress, already in 1930, in its proposal for the need to organise the Empire into an "Economic" Group in opposition to other such Groupings in the world has shown that it is fully prepared to assist in this prosecution of a new search for "markets."

Markets, new markets; British Imperialism looks with envious eyes on Japan's invasion of Manchuria (an envy which was well expressed recently by that lackey the ex-Labour Government Education Minister, Lees-Smith). It secretly and openly supports Japan. In the West it urges upon U.S.A. to join in a Western attack on the Soviet Union to save "civilisation." At the same time this impelling search for markets is bringing it into conflict with this same America, its allies against the Soviet Union.

Tariffs, a Sterling Bloc, Empire Economic Unity, rising prices, all to find new markets, new areas of exploitation. A re-division of the world is the capitalist way out of its crisis—a new World War.

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THE MINERS' FIGHT FOR SEVEN HOURS

By ED. LAUGHLIN

THE breakneck pace of decline in the mining industry indicates very clearly that the general crisis of capitalism will yet reach lower levels.

It is undeniable that the general depression is not only aggravating the coal crisis, but is, in turn, being very strongly affected and intensified by the growing critical situation in the minefields.

The Economic Drive to Collapse

For example, before the war the Iron and Steel industries of this country required an annual supply of 30 million tons, whereas now only a matter of 12½ million tons are required, whilst the displacement of coal by oil alone represents between 3 and 4 million tons annually.

The coal-marketing provisions of the 1930 Mines Act, aiming at wiping out severe competition in the home markets by the introduction of minimum price lists, is also having a deleterious effect on other basic industries which formerly benefited from the broken prices resulting from violent competition amongst the coalowners operating in the home market.

On the export side of the industry the situation is still more alarming. To gauge something like the real measure of the wholesale, catastrophic collapse of the export trade it is well worth while recalling for a moment the state of affairs that prevailed during the first few years of the present century. From 1901 to 1906 an export tariff of 1s. per ton was levied by the Government on every ton of coal leaving these shores. "This device was employed, firstly, to prevent the coal resources being unduly diminished and, secondly, to enrich the Exchequer at the expense of the foreign buyer." (*Tariffs.*—Beveridge. Page 31.)

For many years now policy has swung to the opposite extreme and it has been estimated by R. C. Smart in his *Economics of the Coal Industry* to be costing us between 4s. and 5s. per ton in the endeavour to regain our export trade.

In a mad scramble to maintain fast disappearing markets the average export price f.o.b. per ton was reduced from £3 19s. 11d. in 1920 to 16s. 2d. in 1931. The first quarter of 1932 compared with 1931 has witnessed a further diminution of exports by 600,000 tons, with the price reaching the record low level of 15s. 11d. per ton.

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The following table of production figures leaves no room for doubt as to the universal and increasing collapse of the coal industry.

		1929	1930	1931	1931 Decrease on 1929
Total Output	millions of tons ..	260	243	217	43
Exports	millions of tons ..	60	54	42	18
Number employed ..	..	949,000	887,000	840,000	109,000

The Coalowners' Way Out

It is natural that these figures are causing some alarm to the coalowners and that each company meeting registers with unfailing regularity a plethora of wage-cutting solutions for a way out of the crisis. Mr. C. H. Carlow, at the annual meeting of the Mining Institute of Scotland on April 27 opened his presidential address by stating that " the industry is at present passing through a period of depression, a depression which finds no parallel in the last 50 years." Although close attention was given to the coal marketing and compulsory amalgamation schemes of the Mines Act, great emphasis was laid on the need for ruthlessly cutting down costs, relying on pit managers who could be depended upon to use both tact and pressure to eliminate all unnecessary costing.

In 1930, with the passing of the Coal Mines Act, which was calculated to solve and overcome the crisis, Labour Government spokesmen and leading Trade Union officials vied with each other in claiming credit for " this wonderful piece of mining legislation." The whole apparatus of the M.F.G.B. was swung in behind this huge rationalisation swindle. Every barrier to its growth and smooth working was swept aside by the coalowners' trusted agents, the M.F.G.B. leadership. The seven-hour day was sacrificed and 337,000 miners suffered wage cuts amounting to £39,850 per week.

Has the Mines Act benefited the mineowners? It has certainly been of great assistance to those coalowners operating for the inland market, where they directly derive advantages from output restrictions and fixed prices.

The declared combined profits from coalmining in 1931 amounted to £2,800,000 with close on £5 millions yielded to Royalties and wayleaves. Almost £8 millions crushed out of the bones of the miners in one year and from a depressed industry.

More and more attention is being focussed on the need for subsidising export sales by a general levy on inland producers, as a main means of winning back lost markets. The memorandum of the M.F.G.B. Executive presented to the Mines Department on March 9 sharply raises this question together with an open advocacy in favour of the immediate closing down of all uneconomic pits.

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These bureaucrats openly identify themselves with a policy of mass dismissals and put forward reactionary solutions to help the coal-owners out of their difficulties at no matter what expense to the miners.

The export levy, if agreed to, can mean nothing else but greater attacks on the wages of the miners in every part of the coalfields.

In this respect it would be a big mistake to assume that the National patriotism of the reformist miners' leaders is in any way opposed to their international "Socialist" ideal of international agreements. On the contrary the slogan of "My country's coalowners first" is considerably enhanced by the repeated insistence on international coal agreements. The negotiating strength of the British coalowners within the framework of any international agreement, would naturally be based on present export figures. In order to drive up export figures the reformists hope to cast aside every encumbrance: create mass unemployment, force down wages, and break up the resistance of the miners in the struggle against the coalowners' offensive.

In every coal-producing country the same vicious struggle goes on with the reformist leaders continuously aiding the coal capitalists and urging their Governments to introduce retaliatory measures such as limitation on coal imports, surtaxes and quotas.

With every cancelling out of these reprisals the world price level is reduced and the resultant burdens shouldered by the miners of all countries in the form of lower wages and longer hours. The grand solution creates a deeper crisis than that which it sought to remove.

Speeding-up and Increasing Accidents

And just as the struggle for markets becomes keener the miners are called upon at shorter and shorter intervals to suffer a worsening of conditions, wage-cuts and increasingly murderous speeding-up.

Figures were submitted in the House of Commons on May 3 relating to output per man shift under $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours as compared with an 8-hour shift which showed that individual output increased by 1.39 cwts. on a $7\frac{1}{2}$-hour day. It will be remembered that during the strike struggles of the miners last year the coalowners, supported ably by the Trade Union leaders, cut down wages on the plea that any reduction in hours would mean a heavy increase in the cost of production. To argue that the increasing use of machinery is responsible for the higher productivity would be merely deceiving ourselves. Competent authorities maintain that "Any increase in mechanisation during recent years has barely kept pace with the waning resources of the industry." (R. C. Smart, *Economics of the Coal Industry*.)

The coalowners have, therefore, not only intensified exploitation on a shorter working day, but have robbed the miners of over £2 millions

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annually, based on the lying argument that reduced hours would wreck the industry.

The intensity of mining labour has naturally resulted in a proportionately greater death-rate amongst the miners, in spite of the lying assertions of the Mines Department to the contrary. From 1929 the figures of men killed have declined from 1,095 to 859 in 1931, but having regard to the fact that in 1929 a longer working day was in existence; that the shifts worked averaged 5.08 in 1929 as compared with 4.68 in 1931, and that 109,000 fewer men were employed in 1931 as against 1929, the one-sided statistics of the National Government can be seen through for the fraud they are by every thinking miner.

The figures take no account of the growing frequency of murderous gas explosions, which in almost every instance, occur in the highly-developed conveyor districts where gob-packing and ventilation are exceptionally bad and where men are speeded far past the point of sheer physical exhaustion, producing coal at a price, sometimes as low as 8/6 per ton.

The Reformists invariably look on these horrors as the hand of providence and have the brazen impudence to assert that neither the coal-owners or men (sic) are responsible. (Wm. Adamson at the Bowhill disaster.)

The Reformist Betrayal of Past Struggles

No matter where we look, either in the big struggles of last year or along the daily battle-front where a constant struggle is raging, we find the Reformist leaders invariably concerning themselves with the coal-owners' interests and assisting in the drive to transform the British miners into the coolies of Europe.

From the beginning of 1931 onwards the deep discontent in the mine-fields found its highest expression in the fight for seven hours and no wage cuts.

The masses of miners taking part in these grim struggles were in no wise attracted by any Reformist temporisings of a 7½-hour day, or the Geneva hours' swindle, but were definitely preparing for a national struggle in all districts for the seven hours and no cuts.

In spite of tremendous militancy only equalled in the glorious year of struggle, 1926 (also the year of greatest betrayal), the forces of the fighting miners were broken up, district by district, and the struggle crushed into a series of sectional defeats.

The reason for the defeats was, firstly, the unexampled open treachery of the reformist leaders and, secondly, the weakly-developed revolutionary opposition which had not nearly resolutely enough combated the deep

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strains of reformist ideology and trade union legalism in its ranks and was thereby prevented from building up the united front of the miners against the coalowners, independently of the strike-breaking reformists.

On the plea that strike action would imperil the stability of the Labour Government, the theory of the lesser evil exemplified in the slogan of "Give Labour a Chance," was given practical application to mean "Give Labour a chance to rob you of the seven-hour day and cut wages without a struggle."

On this slogan the Reformists organised blacklegging and did not hesitate to use police terror in their efforts to break the resistance of the miners. It is undeniable, on the other hand, that had the militant miners opposition been fully alive to the exceedingly high wave of militancy sweeping the coalfields and had it intensified its activities within the district Unions of the M.F.G.B. and amongst the unorganised, the degree of independence in the strike movement would not only have increased but the practical advantages would have resulted in victory for the miners.

The Strength of the Revolutionary Opposition

Under the leadership of the United Mineworkers of Scotland, working through all-in Strike Committees the greatest advance was made in building the united front of the miners which, with all its weak sides, forced a substantial modification of the wage cut from 1s. 4½d. to 4½d. per shift.

Despite the big lessons gained from recent strike experiences, can it be said that we have learned from our mistakes, rooted out our weaknesses, and made any appreciable advance in building the revolutionary opposition? We must frankly admit that this is not so. Barely a month will elapse before the 7½-hour day expires, after which the miners should be working a seven-hour day. It is more than certain that the behind-the-scenes manœuvrings of the National Government and the M.F.G.B. will result in last minute legislation, robbing the miners of the seven-hour day.

Reviewing our forces, can we say that the revolutionary opposition is developing to the actual fighting stage for the seven-hour day and no wage cuts?

The uninterrupted spate of coalowners' propaganda saturating the reformists through and through, which aims at proving the economic impossibility of the seven-hour day and lyingly suggesting that the miners are prepared to surrender the seven-hour day in return for present wages is also affecting many hard working comrades in the Miners' Minority Movement and as a consequence our campaign of preparation instead of rising to meet and overcome every fresh obstacle is actually,

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in some instances, being overwhelmed by " difficulties " emanating from the propaganda department of the Coalowners' Association.

The Present Struggles

Is there any possibility of wages being stabilised on the basis of existing terms? It is the experience of every miner that this is an illusion. In the Fife district of Scotland the owners are cutting down the miners' wages from 6d. to 2s. off the day. Over 5,000 men are affected who, under the leadership of the revolutionary United Mineworkers of Scotland (U.M.S.) and a string of pit Strike Committees, are striking *now* against wage cuts on present hours. Throughout the coalfield the same story can be told over and over again. Under these circumstances were the miners to succumb to the lying propaganda of the coalowners by surrendering the seven-hour day more vicious wage-cutting and slave-driving would ensue.

What are the tactics of the Fife coalowners at the moment? Learning from experience they realise that as the pitch of the struggle developed in this part of the coalfield when 15,000 men struck for the seven-hour day in July last year, it is best to switch all attention on the wages question and disarm the developing fight on the hours question in July.

The double aim is obviously to secure wage cuts now and rely on the strike-breaking Reformists to crush the struggle before the general movement develops into the fight for the seven hours, anticipating that by this means the resistence of the miners will be so weakened as to make successful action virtually impossible. These manœuvres may help the coalowners, but for a far different reason should assist the militant opposition to rid itself, once and for all, of the illusion that present wages can be maintained by foregoing the claim for the seven-hour day and in opposition to this raise in ever sharper forms the absolute certainty that the successful fight for shorter hours is the only guarantee that wages will be preserved.

If we place the emphasis on wages to the detriment of hours or *vice versa* we will only succeed in falling into the bog of Reformist double-dealing, which treacherously poses one against the other, to the mutual destruction of both, in the corrupt formulation of wages versus hours. It is a single line path to secure both issues.

It is also most reactionary to argue the possibility of output being maintained under shorter hours as a reason why the seven hours should be granted.

The fight for the seven hours with no wage cuts is also a fight against rationalisation schemes, mass dismissals, intense speeding, and for drastic curtailment of pit accidents, especially the toll of death which

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stalks the coalfield, averaging fifteen miners killed outright every week of the year.

A Lesson from Abroad

If it appears in any way difficult for us to develop the struggle in the British coalfield for the seven hours, what must be said of the heroic struggle of the North Bohemian miners who struck work on March 25 this year to prevent mass dismissals? Thus, at the most advanced point of the rationalisation offensive the mass action of the miners closed this outlet for the coal robbers and defeated the dismissals; the strike ended in complete victory for the workers.

This valuable experience should be burned into consciousness of every militant miner in sharp contrast to, and as a means of thoroughly exposing the M.F.G.B. memorandum, which calmly reconciles itself to mass dismissals as a partial solution for the coal crisis.

International Support

On April 17 the miners of thirteen European countries met in Conference at Saarbrucken, where a policy and programme of demands was hammered out. The outstanding questions were: the fight for shorter hours, against the wage robbery, and against the danger of war.

Pledges were given by our comrades in the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition that in event of strike action being developed in this country for the seven hours, no effort would be spared to spread and internationalise the struggle throughout every important European coalfield and thereby wipe out the horrible blot of 1926, when the Amsterdammers, of all countries, helped their own coalowners to export black coal to defeat the British miners.

The Issues of the Fight

Working out the decisions of the Saarbrucken Conference, the U.M.S. is organising a series of District United Front Conferences for the end of May, to be followed by an all-in Scottish Miners Conference in Falkirk on June 25. From this Conference a representative Strike Committee will be elected which, in conjunction with the U.M.S., will be charged with the responsibility for conducting all negotiations.

At mass meetings in the villages, pits, and Labour Exchanges, the miners are endorsing the U.M.S. letter to the coalowners denouncing the present starvation agreement and calling for its termination on July 8, and with the opening of negotiations on the demands of a seven-hour day with wage increases, and an eight-hour day for all surface workers.

The militants in every district of the coalfield should intensify the campaign by raising in every pit the building of the broad united front of the miners in preparation for the struggle.

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Without preparation there can be no successful struggle.

The ringing call to action of the first European Miners' Congress must sweep the coalfield from end to end rousing the deep, slumbering, discontent of the mining masses in mass actions against the coalowners for the workers way out of the crisis.

" Form the united front everywhere : in the mines and among the unemployed ; in all coalfields and in all countries ; advance concrete militant demands everywhere ; elect fighting committees out of your midst, out of your best comrades.

Organise your struggles on an ever-broader front ; establish contact between the workers from land to land ; create the firmest foundation for international solidarity."

For the seven-hour day !

No wage cuts !

Against dismissals !

Re-employment of the unemployed miners !

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THE FIRST BOLSHEVIK WORKERS' DAILY

By STEPHEN GARRY

[" *We must transform—and we are transforming—the press from an organ of sensation, from a simple apparatus for the communication of political news, from an organ of struggle against bourgeois lies, into an instrument for the economic re-education of the masses, into an instrument for informing the masses how to organise labour on new lines. . . . The press must serve as an instrument of socialist construction, giving information on all details of the success of model communes, studying the causes of their success, the methods of their economy, and on the other hand blacklisting those communes which stubbornly preserve the ' traditions of capitalism,' i.e., anarchy, hole-making, disorders and speculation.*" (Lenin, quoted in the 15th Anniversary issue of *Izvestia*, March 15, 1932.)]

IN March and May the two leading newspapers of the Soviet Union celebrate their birthdays. On March 15, *Izvestia* was fifteen years of age ; May 5 was the twentieth anniversary of the founding of *Pravda*.

The story of the early days of the two newspapers is instructively dissimilar. *Izvestia* was started as the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in March, 1917, after the overthrow of Tsarism, and at first reflected the dominant policies of the Petrograd Soviet. For months the Soviet was controlled by Mensheviks, and the Bolsheviks' struggle to win power in the Soviet was reflected in the struggle to gain control of *Izvestia*. Only in October, 1917, did *Izvestia* pass finally into the hands of the Communist Party.

But *Pravda*, the " first Bolshevik workers' daily," was born in the days of the rising revolutionary enthusiasm of 1912. The Lena Goldfields massacre had shaken the workers of Russia to their depths, and Petersburg and Moscow were seething with a new spirit of revolt. At the same time the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks for the dominant influence among the workers had entered on a new phase. The appearance of *Pravda* was a decisive turning point in that struggle. " *Pravda* first appeared at a period of our party's development when the underground was entirely in the hands of the Bolsheviks (the Mensheviks had fled above ground) and the legal forms of organisation, the Duma fraction, the press, health insurance, the trade union organisations, were still not completely won from the Mensheviks. It was the period of a decisive struggle on the part of the Bolsheviks to drive out the liquidators (Mensheviks) from the legal forms of organisation of the

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working class. It was a truly heroic struggle of the Bolshevik-minded workers for the party, since the agents of Tsarism never slept, but persecuted and exterminated the Bolsheviks. But without legal covering the party, driven underground, was in no condition to develop further. More than that—without the capture of the legal organisations the party could not under the then existing political conditions stretch its feelers into the general masses, and consolidate them around its banner. It would have been torn away from the masses and would have been transformed into an isolated grouping stewing in its own juice!" (The Tenth Anniversary of *Pravda*.)

From the start *Pravda* was uncompromising in its fight against the Mensheviks. Long ere this, in 1900, Lenin had formulated the governing principles on which a workers' newspaper should be organised and continued. In his Draft Declaration on the *Zarya* and *Iskra*, he had stated: "The journal should serve mainly for propaganda, the newspaper mainly for agitation. But all aspects of the movement should be reflected in both the journal and the newspaper, and we wish particularly to emphasise our opposition to the view that a labour newspaper should devote its pages exclusively to matters that immediately and directly concern the spontaneous labour movement, and leave the theory of Socialism, science, politics, questions of party organisation, &c., to an organ for the intelligentsia. On the contrary, it is necessary to combine all the concrete facts and manifestations of the labour movement with these questions; the light of theory must be brought to bear upon every separate fact; propaganda on questions of politics and party organisation must be carried on among the broad masses of the working class; and these questions must be dealt with in the work of agitation. . . . We must try to create a higher form of agitation by means of the newspaper, which must periodically (better translated "regularly"—S.G.) record workers' complaints, workers' strikes and other forms of the proletarian struggle, all the manifestations of political tyranny . . . and draw definite conclusions from each of these facts in accordance with the ultimate aim of Socialism and the political tasks of the proletariat." (Collected Works, English Edition, Vol, IV., Book I., p. 18-19.) With certain modifications, requisite in view of the development of the cleavage between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and the necessity for a more definitely party basis, these were the principles upon which *Pravda* was organised. During the discussion that preceded its appearance these principles were once more laid down in the *Zvyezda*, the Bolshevik weekly journal; the proposed newspaper must be a workers' newspaper, and not a newspaper for the workers; it must be an expression of the class struggle in all its fulness; there must be no place for fractional squabbles, yet it must have a definitely party direction; the ideological tendencies

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inside the workers' movement itself must be definitely elucidated. For the formative days of 1912 these lines were absolutely sound, and, despite doubts even on the editorial board as to the wisdom of so intransigeant a position, these were the lines along which *Pravda* travelled.

The question of starting a workers' newspaper had been discussed by the workers of Petersburg during the summer of 1911, as an alternative to the building of a " Palace of Labour." The needs of the time quickly demonstrated the priority in importance of the newspaper, and when the *Zvyezda* opened its columns to the question the Petersburg workers began to pour in letters supporting the proposal. Almost without exception the workers were in favour of the Leninist line which had been laid down in the *Zvyezda* article : the line of a strict class approach, the line of Marxism, the line of the Bolshevik party.

Expelled from the party in January, 1912, the Menshevik liquidators were not slow to realise the danger to them of such a daily newspaper, and they raised a cry for a " non-party " newspaper, in which all sections of the working class and socialist movement should be represented. In opposition to the *Zvyezda* they issued invitations to the workers to bring their collections and donations to them, as the newspaper they proposed to start would be " non-fractional." But the extent of their influence among the workers of Petersburg at this time is evidenced by the fact that by July, 1912, 504 worker groups had collected and worked for the Bolshevik *Pravda*, exclusive of individual efforts, whereas only 15 had worked for the proposed liquidators' organ. These figures prove the extent to which the Bolsheviks had won the confidence of the masses long before the war and revolution, and give the lie to the story that the Bolsheviks were an insignificant and unknown party that suddenly came to power in 1917 by accident.

By April, 1912, the demand and support for the daily had grown to such a volume that on the 10th of April (old style), *Zvyezda* printed the announcement of its forthcoming issue, and on the 12th subscriptions were invited. Technical difficulties held up the publication of the first number until April 22. (May 5, new style.)

From the beginning *Pravda* had to wage a desperate struggle for existence, against the attacks of the liquidators and of the reactionary forces generally. The liquidators continued their agitation for the transformation of *Pravda* into their own organ, calling for " the attraction of all the vital forces " of the workers' movement into representation on the paper, and for the establishing of trade union and educational societies' control over it. The Black Hundreds press on the other hand declared that *Pravda* was published on subsidies from the police. In addition, from the beginning there was the problem of the censorship : *Pravda* was a Bolshevik Party daily, but the Bolshevik Party was illegal,

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and could not even be mentioned by name. The censorship was especially strict on the paper, and despite considerable caution, during the first three months *Pravda* was confiscated eight times, being fined 2,300 roubles, while five editors in succession were arrested. During its first year of existence it was confiscated 41 times, and was fined 7,800 roubles. In the first month of its second year it was confiscated and fined ten times. It was confiscated on one occasion for the publication of a certain article ; the next day the same number was republished exactly as before, with the omission of the offending article, but was again confiscated, this time for an article which the day before had been passed by the censor. Such were the conditions under which the Russian workers' first Bolshevik daily had to be produced.

On July 5, 1913, *Pravda* was suppressed completely, after 356 numbers. But within eight days its place was taken by the *Workers' Pravda*. This was in turn suppressed, and one after another altogether eight forms of *Pravda* were issued, the newspaper coming to a final (albeit temporary) end only immediately before the war, on July 8, 1914.

During all this period of *Pravda's* existence, Lenin exerted the closest control over and guidance of the paper's policy and agitation. Immediately the daily became an established fact he moved from Paris to Krakov, in Austrian Poland, close to the Russian frontier, where he could maintain much closer contact with party workers inside Russia, and could more easily supervise *Pravda's* development as well as contribute to its pages. Every article written by him in *Pravda* was openly or secretly a challenge and a summons to organisation and action. Again and again he stressed the necessity of fighting the liquidators, of strike action for this or that economic demand, of interesting the peasantry also in *Pravda*, of organising the workers around the party and especially around *Pravda* itself. No one realised more clearly than Lenin the tremendous significance of the publication of a workers' daily newspaper. In an article " On the Results of Six Months' Work " he wrote : " In founding their daily paper, the Petersburg workers have accomplished a great, one can without exaggeration say an historic deed. . . . *Pravda* remains an outstanding demonstration of the consciousness, energy, and solidarity of the Russian workers."

In the same article Lenin went to the root of the matter in pointing out that " only in the conditions of continuous and mass collections among the workers will it be possible by persistent labour to gain a satisfactory basis for workers' newspapers in Russia. . . . But much, incomparably more, important is not the financial aspect of the question, but another. Grant that a hundred workers in various departments of a factory each pay one kopek to collections for the workers' newspaper. The total will be only two roubles each month. Grant on the other

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hand that ten well-paid workers accidentally meeting collect ten roubles in one go. The first two roubles are of more value than the second ten. . . . The most important thing is to establish and extend the habit of " a kopek for the workers' newspaper. . . . The entire importance of these collections consists in their being collected regularly, without interruption, and in a continually increasing number of workers taking part in these regular collections."

That *Pravda* strove to live up to the ideal set by Lenin, despite the tremendous difficulties of existence in Tsarist Russia, is shown by a report of its activities during the first year. Out of the 1,335 articles published, 226 were devoted to the workers' struggles against the capitalists. 80 articles were devoted to the social insurance campaign, 48 to organisation of the workers, 11 to factory inspection, 141 to the elections to the State Duma, 55 to the Duma and the State Council, 137 to polemics with the Liberals and Octobrists, and 52 to polemics with the liquidators. Over two thousand items consisted of correspondence dealing with strikes in Petersburg, and some 450 dealt with strikes elsewhere, all of which were contributed from the scene of the conflict.

In its report on the second year's activities, the editorial board rightly declared that the soul of the newspaper was now the worker correspondents, who during this year contributed 11,114 items. During the same year over two hundred articles were written by workers themselves. In very deed *Pravda* " stood in the centre of the struggle for a party basis and for the creation of a mass workers' party. It was not merely a newspaper summarising the results of the Bolsheviks' successes in capturing the legal workers' organisations—it was at the same time the organising centre consolidating the legal workers' organisations around the underground centres of the party and guiding the workers' movement towards one definite end." (Stalin, *op. cit.*)

Pravda was suppressed by the Tsarist repression in July, 1914, on the very eve of the Imperialist war. Its suppression was an essential pre-requisite to the successful entry of Russia into that war. For nearly three years *Pravda* was only a name and a hope. But its resurrection in March, 1917, was just as essential a pre-requisite to the success of the struggle to overthrow not only Tsarism, but also the Liberal bourgeois elements which had come to power in succession to Tsarism. One of Lenin's first steps on his return from exile was to enter into the closest co-operation with *Pravda*, and during the next few months the newspaper was Lenin's mouthpiece for arousing the Russian workers to the necessity of the final overthrow of capitalism.

From a circulation of 30,000 in circumstances of black severity of repression and reaction, to a circulation of over two million in the land of workers and peasants' freedom ; from an " organ of struggle against

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bourgeois lies, into an instrument for the economic re-education of the masses, an instrument for informing the masses how to organise labour on new lines : such is the historic road that *Pravda* has travelled. But whilst in terms of circulation and influence its progress has been tremendous, its principles and policies have remained fundamentally the same : the Marxist principles formulated in terms of current struggles by Lenin, now carried to their triumphant consummation by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin.

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MR. WELLS SHOWS HIS CLASS

By D. S. MIRSKY

The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind. By H. G. Wells. (Illustrated.) (Heinemann.) 10s. 6d.

H. G. WELLS is an influence to be reckoned with. He has literary talent and is eminently readable. He shares with Sir James Jeans the gift of tickling the imagination of the common reader, and suggesting new thoughts to him without really making him think. He has every appearance of being advanced and progressive. He is no respecter of venerable institutions, he jibes on occasions at royalty and religion and his satirical hits at millionaires and politicians are sometimes quite effective. Above all he is not afraid of taking up really ambitious tasks for the enlightenment of mankind, and is alone in the bourgeois world to have attempted a synthesis of knowledge on an encyclopædic scale. A complete and co-ordinated picture of the world of Nature and of Man is a thing the common reader naturally craves for, so he is inevitably attracted towards Wells, and Wells gives him what he wants in the most attractive form imaginable. The encyclopædic works of Wells form and will, for some time to come, continue to form the main stock of general knowledge of the petty bourgeois and of the educated worker. Proletarian education as it penetrates into the mass of the British working class will find in Wells one of its principal and toughest opponents. It is consequently necessary to study him.

Wells is not an idealist of the modern type, not a holoist or an intuitivist, but a positivist and an agnostic. It is this that gives him his quasi-progressive appearance, and makes him look so out-of-date and so low-brow to the full-fledged product of the age of the general crisis of Capitalism. He is also an optimist, " hope and courage " for him are " inevitable." But he is no longer a believer in automatic progress, of progress by the beneficent operation of individual interests, as the ideologists of ascending capitalism were. Progress for him can only be " the outcome of constant effort and critical vigilance." He is a fierce hater of democracy and a believer in organisation and order. Progress can only be the work of an " open conspiracy " of intellectuals. It must be achieved by education, but " education . . . is to a large extent repression—discipline. . . . The Policeman, not the Saint, is the guardian of freedom in the highways and byways."[1] The great sin of Socialism

[1]And again in quite a different part of the book the " Traffic policeman is most symbolical of social organisation."

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is that, instead of developing the sound ideas of Fourier and Robert Owen, it was corrupted by Marx into laying its hopes in the masses. Wells has a particular hatred of the peasant; he abuses the Soviet government for encouraging the Kolkhozy (Collective Farms) which " display the old sentimental unwashed sweating ' democratic ' side, all natural virtue, brotherhood and kisses," instead of expropriating the peasants and turning their lands into State farms.

All this shows Wells to be the ideologist of Imperialism. Though he is the idol of the educated petty bourgeois there is not an ounce of the petty bourgeois outlook in him. He is only an instrument for the grafting of an Imperialist ideology on to the petty bourgeois.

But he is not the outspoken defender of Imperialism as it is. He is the prophet of an idealised Imperialism, of an Imperialism in which " economic nationalism " will have been superseded by world-wide " open conspiracy " which will not allow " New Jersey or Denmark " to solve their problems by themselves and " will not tolerate " any "reversion to nationalism "; an Imperialism where the wicked millionaires, the Jay Goulds and the Basil Zaharoffs will be replaced by virtuous Henry Fords, an Imperialism which will as a body reproduce the transformation of the unscrupulous Rockefeller of the Eighties and Nineties into the munificent and generous Rockefeller[2] of our own times; an Imperialism where " profit-seeking banking will not be tolerated " and all bankers will be inspired by the ideal of Service. (Wells, of course, has sufficiently literary skill not to write the word with a capital S.) His chief hero is Edison, and it is after the model of Edison that he imagines the leaders of his " open conspiracy." Wells's ideology is thus not a *direct* reflexion of the minds of the actual class of finance capitalists. It is the ideology of the higher technical intelligentsia who have become very closely amalgamated with the capitalist class, and may draw incomes inferior to those of only the biggest millionaires—but who have the illusion of having attained to wealth and power by sheer intellectual superiority and not by mere " non-productive accumulation." But though their ideology is different from that of the bosses themselves, the bosses have every reason to encourage it for it is certainly one of the best methods of justifying the capitalist system. The struggle of the working class is, according to Wells, a " class war against the able " and it is primarily from the class of capitalists that salvation is expected to come, for it is some enlightened and munificent " anti-Zaharoff " who is expected to finance the re-education of mankind under the guidance of the " open conspirators," and with the help, of course, of the " traffic policemen."

[2]Rockefeller, says Wells in an extraordinary panegyric of that person, " grew and broadened at every stage of his career."

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The prospect is fascinating to all concerned and so is it to the Wells-reading bank clerk who is quite happy to be promised to have his life made brighter and more decent along familiar and unrevolutionary lines, The trouble is that " modern civilisation " does not produce the experts needed to transform society. Experts in natural processes it has in plenty, who will split the atom and bring television into every home, who will combat malaria and produce unheard of varieties of the Drosophilla fly. But bourgeois science and bourgeois technique stop at the gates of the human world. Wells himself is an admirable illustration of this unsurmountable limitation. The contrast between the brilliant and vivid first part of his *Outline of History* which deals with the history of the world before the rise of human society and the helplessly philistine account of human history is typical of the whole of bourgeois science.

As soon as the bourgeois scientist approaches history and society he becomes an amateur. He may be plausible and witty on separate issues, he is incapable of constructive work. Sociology and social psychology give the complete measure of bourgeois impotence in this field. Nothing can be more characteristic than the chapter in which Wells expounds the fundamentals of " social psychology " and sets out the theory (borrowed from Jung) of the different types of social " persona," in other words of the typical mentalities of which society is composed. Everything is characteristic here : the abstract, anti-historical approach which discovers the same elements at all stages of human history ; the reduction of the social to the individual, of the objectively historical to the psychological by the substitution of persona for class. But most characteristic of all are the actual types of persona which he distinguishes. There are three of them : the acquisitive, sedentary, property-bound " peasant " (which includes as a negative variation the proletarian), the " predatory nomad." and " autocrat," and the " priest," devoted to the ideal of service. It is equally characteristic that he should thus amateurishly distort, in the two former " personas " the real entities of the petty bourgeois and of the feudal class ; that he should leave out as minor variations of these two the capitalist and the worker (the capitalist is distributed, in fact, between all three classes, for don't we have to make room among the priests for the virtuous " anti-Zaharoff ") ; and that he should add the priests as a distinct, and superior type. (The actual term " priest " is significant ; incidentally it lays bare the ancestry of Wells's social psychology in the ideas of Auguste Comte.)

Thus the conception of class, the only serviceable conception for an understanding and mastering of history and social science is deliberately and inevitably lost hold of. Here we can, as it were, lay the finger on the actual working of those inhibitions which prevent the bourgeois social student from seeing the realities of the social world. We can again lay

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our finger on this mechanism of inhibition in the economic section of the book where Wells discusses the causes of the present crisis. He admits, for instance, that " one cause—though not the only cause—is that production is run primarily for the profit of entrepreneurs and their financiers and not for the good of the mediocre mass," and that " if Soviet Russia succeeds and begins to prosper " there is nothing to stave off a revolutionary situation in the " Atlantic " countries. But a curious kind of ataxy prevents him from being able to handle or develop these ideas, he loses hold of them and discourses interminably about " economic nationalism " and the fetishism of gold and the shortcomings of the " cash credit system " in the most approved manner.[3]

I do not think that Wells is entirely unconscious of the nature of these inhibitions and of the roots of this intellectual impotence. A striking thing about him, which makes one think so, is his very obvious inferiority complex in respect of Marxism and Communism. He feels that here is something which alone can achieve and is achieving what he would like to do—organising and planning human history, making the efforts and possessing the " critical vigilance " which is the only way for bringing about progress. But he sees this can only be done by adopting the point of view of the working class and this he cannot admit. He is condemned by his class position to go on handling his ineffective conception in the service of Imperialism. But he vents his resentment on the Communists in a stream of underhand spite and venom. As soon as he approaches the subject his inferiority complex wells up. He screws onto himself a grimace of contempt beneath which it is easy to recognise the features of envy. This is, for instance, the way in which he acknowledges the dependence of his conception of the persona on the Marxist conception of class.

> The Marxist indeed makes some pretensions to psychology with his phrases about a " class-conscious proletariat " and a " bourgeois mentality " and the like. He shows at last an awareness of differences of persona. But . . . so discredited and warped are they that they will be of no use to us here."

In other cases the spite is quite gratuitous and merely a spontaneous and unprovoked overflow of unsuppressible envy, as, for instance, where he speaks of " the Communist with his infallible inexactitude of nomenclature and his ineradicable passion for sham erudition," applying the term " proletariat " (derived from *proles*—children) to the " modern proletarian who is generally without children." Of course, Wells knows perfectly well that at the time when the word proletariat was first given currency among Communists a main feature of working class families was precisely the great number of children. This is still so in many

[3]Another section where this mechanism of inhibition may be studied is the chapter on over-population which is treated along purely Malthusian lines.

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countries (France, *e.g.*), but even if it were not it is no more reason for pedantically letting the word drop, than it would be to forbid Mr. Wells to call himself by his name on the ground that he is not a well of wisdom. This inferiority complex—of which there are more illustrations than I can quote—is one of the most interesting aspects of Wells's new book, and a curious homage paid by the would-be bourgeois encyclopædist to the rising civilisation of the working class.

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MEDICINE IN THE SERVICE OF THE BOURGEOISIE

[*Below we print a commentary by Comrade E. A. Fidler on an article by Comrade Frost with the above title, which appeared in the March number of the* LABOUR MONTHLY. *We add a reply by Comrade Frost. Readers are invited to give expression to their views on the subject.*]

I.—A Further Contribution

By E. A FIDLER

IN the March number of the LABOUR MONTHLY Comrade Frost has put up a very useful piece of anti-capitalist propaganda under the above heading, with which we not only agree in the main but heartily endorse. Unquestionably, the medical profession is in the service of the bourgeoisie and, to the interested observer, it is clear the profession is dominated by its capitalist environment. The indictment of the medical profession is nowhere more ably framed than in the preface to the *Doctor's Dilemma* by George Bernard Shaw. In that indictment, Shaw reaches the very heights of incisive criticism and demonstrates clearly the dependency of the medical profession upon its capitalist surroundings. It is an unanswerable case. True, G. B. S. makes his peace with the profession before he leaves the subject, but the indictment is there for all that, and it supports Comrade Frost's case.

But where Comrade Frost errs, in my humble judgment, is when he states "The problem is no longer how to treat disease inherent in Capitalism; the problem shifts—not what are the causes of disease, but what are the conditions of health?" One infers from this that Comrade Frost is convinced that all disease is inherent in Capitalism and that if Capitalism is abolished and conditions of health established all will be well. This view is borne out by his earlier statement, "Analysis attempts to solve the unnecessary and superfluous problem of elucidating the causes of existing disease." He, clearly, is of the opinion that it is possible to understand the conditions of health without understanding the causes of disease. This is a point which needs very deep consideration.

Comrade Frost enumerates all the conditions of health. To these we can agree. Yet we say, advisedly, that the problem is deeper and wider than the mere establishment of health conditions, as generally understood, or else we should not see springing from the same set of

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social conditions splendid specimens of humanity side by side with physical degenerates—from the same families even where conditions are identical in all respects.

Whilst agreeing that capitalism produces and maintains conditions tending toward disease it would be foolish to shut our eyes to fact and the fact is " Disease is as old as mankind," as one writer, bent on the laudation of the medical profession, states, or, in other words, wherever mankind exists and under whatever conditions there is the possibility, the tendency, to disease.

What is termed " senile decay " is, at bottom, a form of disease ! Toothache, headache and colds are the accompaniment of all walks of life and who would be rash enough to say " impossible under Communism ? And what are these but incipient disease ? One could pursue that side much further but that, here, I take it, is unnecessary.

There is, undoubtedly, a mystery in connection with the animal body which, up to now, has baffled mankind. The medical profession were of the opinion that they had elucidated the mysterious cause when they discovered the so called germ, but impartial students of both sides of the controversy are convinced there is, to say the least of it, a grave doubt about the whole matter.

That being the case the problem is not merely to produce the conditions of health but also to elucidate the causes of disease.

This latter, as well as the former, is essentially the task of the proletariat. The bourgeois training of the medical profession prejudices in advance all attempts at independent thought *along new lines*. As, in the case of economic problems, capitalist economists are bounded in their outlook by the capitalist system, so is the medical profession bounded in its outlook by its bourgeois training and philosophy.

And yet thought along new lines is essential. The old thought has brought things to a deadlock, and the medical profession is as far from the truth to-day as to the fundamental mystery of the body as when Pasteur stepped upon the scene with the slogan " A germ is a disease and a disease is a germ." This latter has been the dominating thought for fifty years with its consequent deadlock allowing all sorts of false theories to influence the profession and bringing into prominence different persons at different periods whose theories had to be discarded under pressure of hostile criticism such as Lister with his antisepsis, Koch with Tuberculin, and a host of others whom one could mention ; but, and this is important, these men are spoken of to-day as if their theories were incorporated in modern practice and had not had to be dropped completely or, in other words, as if their theories had contributed to human knowledge. It is perhaps unfair to have mentioned

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only two as if they were the only mistaken ones, but this, which I have said, could be applied to dozens, some of whom have aired their theories and are living to-day.

New ideas have been constantly tabooed, particularly when they originate from persons outside the medical profession, but also inside the profession when they have taken the form of opposition to the germ theory. Apart from new ideas common sense criticism even has raised hostility, so much so that only the boldest has dared to do this publicly. The one man in particular who has led the opposition, who has dared to be a Daniel, is Dr. Hadwin, the anti-vivisectionist, with serious results, in the form of organised opposition at his meetings, efforts to shout him down, stink bombs, physical force, &c., and a tremendous effort to imprison him upon a charge of manslaughter, which would have been successful but for the very able defence of Dr. Hadwin himself, as all who followed the Gloucester Trial are aware.

We are not arguing that Dr. Hadwin understands the fundamental cause of disease; on the contrary, in our humble opinion, Dr. Hadwin is as much in the dark as to the basic mystery of the body as the rest of the profession, but study of the contradictions of Pasteur and common-sense observation in day to day practice, as a medical man, has convinced him of the weakness, the fallacy of the theory and he is honest enough to voice his opinion.

The stumbling block to progress on the part of the profession has been the lack of self-criticism and the consequent inability to profit by mistakes. The reason for this can be summed up by saying: "The medical profession is dominated by its capitalist environment."

When new methods of treatment are advocated, demonstrated and proved beyond the shadow of a doubt to be along right lines, to all with eyes to see, they are ignored.

One very outstanding instance of this occurred before the war.

An American, named Bernarr Macfadden, by the originality of his ideas and the correctness of his treatment, forced himself, with the aid of his magazines, books, fine physique and lecturing ability, right into the front rank of public observation. One book in particular, *Fasting, Hydropathy and Exercise*, I venture to suggest, is a milestone on the road of physiological progress, and deserves as much recognition as, say, Harvey's *Circulation of the Blood*.

In that book, Macfadden not only puts fasting, so essential a factor in the treatment of certain aspects of disease, upon a scientific basis but did what no other man, to my knowledge, had seriously attempted before and that was laid the foundation, in a practical way, for the treatment of disease and its curation becoming an exact science.

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We would agree that his deductions and remedial measures proposed in the book should have the closest possible scrutiny by a much wider group, and in the light of the new knowledge which has been acquired as a result of his contribution to the subject, but we do argue that the principle, the form, is correct even if some of his deductions may be proved, after further research, to be wrong.

The fact that Macfadden's ideas were ignored by the profession, as such, is further proof that the profession is dominated by its bourgeois environment. It simply did not dare to look the question squarely in the face.

True, some of his ideas were adopted, surreptitiously, by members of the profession, but, even so, in such a distorted form as to be practically useless.

There is one further point raised by Comrade Frost which must receive attention and that is, he appears to confine dialectics, in this matter of health, entirely to the provision of health conditions, but surely dialectics applies to every matter, every subject, and the functioning of the human body must necessarily be included, or, in other words, is there not the dialectic of the animal system ? Might we not rather say that because we do not fully understand the dialectic of the human body we do not understand the nature of disease and that once that dialectic is understood the cause of disease is clear ?

May not this mystery of the human body be the very key to the situation ?

Without labouring the subject further, I suggest that the tasks before the proletariat are :

Firstly, the setting up of those conditions for health enumerated by our Comrade Frost ; this, coupled with the new outlook on life for the proletariat which the revolution brings about is a tremendous factor towards health. But Communism is the completion of man's control over Nature, and that control would be incomplete without the solving of the fundamental mystery of the animal system : which bring us to the :

Second task, which is, the reviewing of the whole of the evidence upon which the germ theory of disease is based as a result of which the fundamental error of that theory will be exposed. As Dr. Hadwin says in relation to Pasteur, quoting Thomas Carlyle, " that no error is fully confuted until you have seen not only that it is an error, but also how it became one."

Thirdly, the closest possible examination of all modern ideas on health, particularly those of Bernarr Macfadden, including modern practice, of course, the sorting of the wheat from the chaff, with the definite objective of making the curation of disease an exact science.

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In conclusion, whilst these are the tasks before the proletariat, as I see them, whether it is possible for the Soviet Union, with its absorption in profound economic tasks, to spare the energy to develop that fierce searchlight of public criticism and attention which alone can allow the full vent to ideas which are contrary to authority, can shake itself free from the entanglements of the germ theory and reduce the whole matter of health to its chemical constituents, thereby leading the world scientifically, as it is tending to do economically, is a question which time alone can answer.

II.—A Reply

By DAVID I. FROST

DEAR COMRADE,

Your letter raises a number of points which call for some reply from me.

For instance, where you champion Macfadden you might be considered "faddy." Surely it is more important first to destroy the basis of of ordinary accepted orthodox bourgeois medicine. If you had made out a case on orthodox lines (and a strong case *can* be made out—or else why are medical men and the masses taken in?) then the discussion would have helped a wide circle.

As for the Macfadden system of fasting itself, my objections are:

(1) That it takes no account of social and economic factors at all. The Macfadden fast could be carried out just as effectively under any economic system—capitalism, for instance. It is not indissolubly bound up with a *fight* for the change of the present economic system. Indeed, in so far as it provides a way of escape—if any—it brings about passivity in the struggle against poverty. What, after all, is easier than to advocate fasting for the unemployed or for workers with wage cuts? But, actually, of course, the unemployed who fast well enough will hardly agree about the beneficial mental and physical effects. Moreover, can Macfadden explain why the infant mortality rate in Shoreditch is three times higher than in Hampstead?

(2) Macfadden himself has made little quantitative study of the physiology of fasting. The experiments he quoted (Benedict) are those carried out at the Carnegie Foundation.

(3) In his treatment of diabetes—where fasting is a recognised treatment—he quotes the orthodox Joslin with approval.

I think, too, comrade, that when you fluctuate between mystical idealism on the one hand and mechanism on the other, you must be

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convinced that your treatment of the subject is somewhat undialectical. You speak of the " mystery in connection with animal body which up to now has baffled mankind." What is this but mystical idealism ? What then—are we to wait until the mystery is cleared up ? Can't we get moving before—don't we know now enough to be able to get a move on ? This is passive agnosticism.

On the other hand, you want to " reduce the whole matter of health to its chemical constituents " implying thereby that it is possible to reduce the higher problem of health to chemical units, and again you lapse into agnosticism by saying that this " is a question which time alone can answer." Are we again to wait for time to answer—this is the way of passivity. You are also inclined to look to Russia to give an answer—again this reflects on so many other workers who want to let the Russians fight their battles for them. If we wait for time and Russia to answer (Russia, by the way, *has* answered) then the capitalist war of intervention will put the answer off for at least a generation. We must not wait, but be up and doing in the class war ourselves.

A further point you make is that splendid " specimens " can exist under bad conditions. Surely this is not the line for a class-conscious worker to take ? Because the working class has tremendous powers of resistance is that a reason for burdening it with poverty and underfeeding ? How many more splendid specimens should we have without the crushing disadvantages placed on the backs of the proletariat ?

When you quote that " Disease is as old as mankind," is that a reason for not getting rid of a *known preventable disease* as consumption, the infectious and parasitic diseases and so on ? If cancer were the only disease left to fear then we shall have rid ourselves of most of our troubles. As for " old age "—even this we can do some things for—because most of us under the present system, get old long before our time.

You criticise me when I suggest that under the workers' dictatorship the problem shifts—not what are the causes of diseases, but what are the conditions of health. What is wrong with the statement of the problem ? You suggest without a knowledge of causes of disease it is impossible to create conditions of health—but surely we know the cause of most preventable diseases—the cause is capitalist production for profit. Under a system of production for *use* and under the social consciousness that this implies the diseases mentioned above would be practically wiped out, and the hunt for non-operative causes would be " superfluous " as I originally suggested. Dirt and uncleanliness, insanitation, poverty, ignorance, are responsible for much disease—the germs which flourish under such conditions are, for bourgeois doctors, the " cause " of disease. Dirt, uncleanliness and insanitation, poverty ignorance, are bound up with capitalism, inseparable from it, eternal

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and coeval with it. So much so that doctors are compelled, in capitalist society, to work upon this as a fixed foundation. This is not to say that all the knowledge derived from bacteriology cannot be made use of—especially in a transition period. But I think that the search for pathogenic bacteria will become less important as compared with the search for bacteria which can be turned to the advantage of mankind. For example, " nitrogen-fixing " bacteria can be used to make available the unlimited store of inert nitrogen in the air, for useful soil-fertilising purposes.

Finally, the problem is not whether disease will disappear entirely under Communism—but whether all the knowledge we have already accumulated about the economic and bacteriological factors in disease will receive universal *practical* application. Under Communism there is the certainty of removing poverty and the germs that flourish with it. What more can be expected ? And as for the diseases which may persist, then under Communism there is the certainty that a planned collective drive of scientists will be made to wipe it out, and build up healthier and longer-lived types, which in the course of struggle against disease, unhampered by the crippling bonds of capitalism, will rise triumphant over it.

" LABOUR MONTHLY " CONFERENCE REPORT— A CORRECTION.

Comrade M. Roer writes to correct an error which appeared in the Report of the Second LABOUR MONTHLY Conference in the May issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY, referring to him as a member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and his speech as following its line. He states that he is not a member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, but a supporter of the Communist Party.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A REVOLUTIONARY ATTITUDE TO RELIGION.

Lenin on Religion. Little Lenin Library, No. 7. (Martin Lawrence Ltd.) 56 pages. 1s.

THIS little book throws a ray of light on a very dark spot of British socialist philosophy. It explains concisely what must be the attitude of a revolutionary towards religion, and in so doing it lays bare the reformism of those so-called socialists and socialist parties which regard religion as a private matter while all the time their members and leaders are active workers within one or other of the institutionalised denominations.

Lenin, on this point, states the Marxist position precisely when he says (page 12), " we demand that religion be regarded as a private matter as far as the State is concerned, but under no circumstances can we regard it as a private matter in our own Party." Or, as the Editors say in their introduction: " Atheism is a natural and inseparable part of Marxism, of the theory and practice of scientific socialism."

In our fight against religion we must not, however, as Lenin points out (page 14), " allow ourselves to be sidetracked into a treatment of the religious question in the abstract—idealistically—as a matter of ' reason ' quite detached from the class struggle—" Rather, the workers must (page 20), " learn to fight against the social facts from which religion arises in a united, disciplined, planned and conscious manner " ; that is they must learn to fight against the rule of the capitalist in all its forms. The growing consciousness of this fight alone will eradicate religion from their minds.

In this respect we differ from the Free Thinker and Bourgeois Atheist who fights against religion in a purely abstract theoretical sense. Marxists are something more than abstract materialists, *i.e.*, enemies of religion ; they are dialecticians who fight against religion as they fight against every other arm of the bourgeois superstructure, that is, concretely (page 21) " on the basis of the class struggle actually proceeding—a struggle which is educating the masses better than anything else can do."

In exposing the reactionary character of bourgeois materialism, this wonderful little book stresses, by implication, the need for some co-ordinated work by militant atheists to counteract the dangerous influences of the bourgeois atheist schools, and, in developing the cultural side of our revolutionary activity —and this, in the past, has been sadly neglected—we could profitably devote some attention to the propagation of revolutionary atheism as a tactic of our developing revolutionary onslaught against the entire commodity system.

J.Y.

AN INSOLUBLE PROBLEM—FOR CAPITALISM.

Britain's Trade and Agriculture. By M. Fordham. (Allen & Unwin.) 224 pages. 7s. 6d.

MR. Fordham, in this book, assembles quite a number of telling facts against the capitalist system, but offers nothing but reformist " remedies " —import and marketing boards, a managed currency as well as tariffs quotas, and subsidies all receive his blessing in greater or lesser degree.

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While professing to disbelieve in capitalist rationalisation, he looks to savings made in distribution to raise the farmers' price to an " economic level," and, in particular cases, thinks subsidies might be necessary, payable out of funds now granted for the relief of unemployment !

It is impossible to read Mr. Fordham's book without realising the confusion of mind of the author. His main thesis, the necessity of raising the price level, falls into line with all capitalist thought from Mr. Winston Churchill to Mr. MacDonald. He argues that it is not the cost of production which causes home-grown food to be dear, but costly distribution. He apparently does not realise that national debts and all capitalist tribute in the form of rent, interest and profit enter into the cost of production as well as the inefficiency of production under the private ownership system. Production under capitalism has no plan. It is chaotic and undeniably wasteful.

Mr. Fordham thinks that the British farmer can never hope to win permanently in the competitive battle with the foreigner, which is true, because, as long as the capitalist system lasts the export of capital to the source of the cheapest labour will continue. He therefore advocates the increasing and guaranteeing of prices to the farmers with the object of doubling British production. He puts our national requirements at £560 millions, but this is, of course, based on the quite inadequate consumption of the working classes. If British production were doubled, he thinks we could produce £400 millions, but becomes hopelessly confused when he attempts to show what food must be excluded from coming into the country to get this result. He suggests that the increased production is to be a *substitute* for either what is now imported as " tribute " or " barter trade." In the first case, does he think that the financiers will willingly forgo their interest on foreign investments, or does he advocate the re-investment of interest and a further piling up of foreign indebtedness, or perhaps the allowing of debtor countries to repudiate their indebtedness ? On all these questions he is silent. Secondly, will the exporting capitalists willingly forgo their profits on behalf of the farmer, who is not necessarily a consumer of the commodities they have to sell ?

The proper treatment of Agriculture cannot be applied till after the proletarian revolution, which will free it from all such anachronisms as private ownership in land, church tithes, unco-ordinated production and consumption, financier controlled credit and currency manipulation and the whole absurd capitalist economic system which can only increase production during a period of rising prices or inflation or, in plain words, a further and more-or-less secret mulcting of the workers' wages, to be followed by the export of more capital and subsequent slump and unemployment.

The problem of correctly balancing Agriculture and Industry is one of the most interesting problems of Socialist reconstruction. It can never be achieved under any modified capitalist sustem because that system is based on the permanent subjection of the agricultural worker in every capitalist country in the world.

Books of the type of Mr. Fordham's can only emanate from bourgeois minded authors who are bewildered by the contradictions and confusions of a decaying system.

E.B.

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AN ITALIAN TRAITOR SURVEYS HIS HANDIWORK.

Ten Years of Tyranny in Italy. By Pietro Nenni. (Allen & Unwin.) 218 pp. 7s. 6d.

THIS book is a translation from the original French *Guerre Civile en Italie*, published in 1930. The author is a social democrat, and was managing Editor of *Avanti* when its offices were burned down by the Fascists. He was a close friend of Mussolini for several years, spent some time in gaol with him in 1911, and gives some glimpses of the character and socialist views of the dictator.

Like Mussolini, the author was a social-patriot during the war. He gives a graphic picture of the disturbances of the post-war period, the bread riots, strikes, unemployment, as well as the flaunting orgies of the bourgeois. He also depicts the mass sympathy of the workers and peasants of Italy for Lenin and the Soviets, and the brutalities of Fascist policy. Much of this is commonplace to-day, but makes informative reading for those workers newly come to the revolutionary movement in this country.

For us, the three most important of the eight chapters of this book of 218 pages are "The Occupation of the Factories," "The Socialist Crisis" and "The Fascist March on Rome." Under these three headings the critical reader will find material for an interpretation of the tactics of the Italian Socialist Party, during the struggle which led to the victory of the Fascists.

The approach of the author is the approach of a social-democratic liberal bemoaning the destruction of the parliamentary system, and the methods of Fascist violence. For him "the crisis in the State of 1920 was of a predominantly psychological order." He sees and depicts all the material factors, a war weary proletariat, shutting down of factories, mass unemployment aggravated by demobilised and disillusioned soldiers; a dislocated industry and disorganised bourgeoisie with a government which had lost its head. All this he sees, but merely deplores as a nervous disorder of the State.

What was the nature of the crisis of 1920? Of course, Italy was bound to be caught in the same toils as other capitalist countries. But what of the other side of the picture? Before the war the Italian workers had strong organisations. The Socialist Party had a membership of 50,000 with 52 representatives in parliament. It had a powerful daily press. There were half a million organised in the Trade Unions embracing workers and peasants.

In 1920 the Party had risen to 216,327 members. The Trade Unions boasted 2 million members. *Avanti*, the central party organ, had a circulation of 300,000 copies. There were 2,162 municipalities and 26 provinces in the hands of the workers. To quote the author, "Every village and hamlet had its Lenin . . . . . It was the time, to quote Serrati, when the discussion of every question was flavoured with the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . . Sedition was rife in the army . . . . Spontaneous demonstrations in public squares, in cafes, restaurants, and everywhere else."

The proletariat had every justification to feel proud and strong. They felt they had come into their own at last. They had been read and schooled in the teachings of Marxism. And so they took possession of the factories, and railwaymen refused to transport troops to dislodge their brothers.

But what of the Socialist Party? Would it take the complementary action of seizing power and set up a Soviet Government, a dictatorship of the proletariat? For this is what the workers wanted. Serrati and other leaders of

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the Socialist Party had been to Russia for the Second Congress of the Communist International. They had had the advantage of collaboration and observation with the Soviets of Russia.

But no, it temporised, engaged in an interminable abstract discussion, " Was the occupation of the factories a political movement, or was it merely engineered by the Trade Unions? Finally, it defined the occupation as ' the attainment of Trade Union control of the factories.' "

This was the opportunity of the bourgeoisie.

Giolliti summoned the employers and workers to Turin (much like Lloyd George's Parliament of Industry) and persuaded the capitalists to recognise the *principle* of workers' control. A remark by Mussolini at this stage, quoted by the author, puts the situation in a nutshell. " What do I care whether the factories belong to the industrialists or to the workers. We Fascists will only interfere in the event of a rising on Bolshevik lines." So the issue of the moment was really for or against a soviet system.

With such powerful backing in numbers, discipline and enthusiasm behind the Socialists as well as the Trade Unions the task was on the face of it as easy as that of the Bolsheviks. Why were the workers not supported? The answer to this we believe is to be found in the composition and make-up of the leadership of the Trade Unions and the Socialist Party.

There were three clearly defined currents in the Socialist Party. On the Right a group of confirmed reformists headed by Turati and Modigliani. In the Centre, holding the majority, was Serrati, vacillating, hesitant, while mouthing Marxist phrases and platonic friendship for Russia. On the Left the younger elements that were to form the Communist Party and " ultra-lefts," including the anti-parliamentarian and abstentionist Bordiga.

The Trade Union Federation carried its " Jimmy " Thomas's in the shape of the sabatoeur D'Aragona, &c.

Under pressure of the workers' sympathy for the Soviet system Serrati attended the Second Congress of the Communist International (June-July, 1920). He spoke there four times on the " National Question," the " Agrarian Question," the " 21 Conditions," and the " Fundamental Tasks of the C.I." On all these questions he adopted an attitude of " Neutrality."

When later in September the Italian workers occupied the factories, Serrati adopted the same attitude of hesitancy and " Neutrality." He engaged the Party in a polemic as to whether " under these circumstances the Italian proletariat can take possession." And when the bourgeois Giolliti asked him what he was going to do about it, and what measures he was going to take against the workers who had seized the factories, he replied that for the time being he was compelled to adopt homeopathic means and later on resort to surgery.

Needless to say the bourgeoisie took the hint. They not only applied homeopathic methods, but straightway resorted to surgery, which culminated in the Fascist march on Rome.

The author gives some graphic details of the violent repression of strikes, the Fascist march on Rome, the burning of the offices of " Avanti," the murdering and destruction of the revolutionary workers and their organisations. But what we are here concerned with is the author's views as to the culpability for the inaction and sabotage of the Socialist Party during the occupation of the factories and when the general strike was called. For the workers must learn from their past experiences.

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Nenni blames Moscow for demanding the unconditional acceptance of the 21 conditions, and for demanding the expulsion of the reformist Right from the Party. He admits " the parliamentary group were in a state of incipient revolt against the leadership of the Party," the while, Serrati " all through the night weighed in soul and conscience alike the pros and cons of the proposals of the parliamentary group to re-establish normal conditions in the country and thus bring about the disarmament of the Fascist brigades."

On the author's own showing, the facts are the leadership was pushed into the general strike. But under the deadweight of the Reformists of the Right, the criminal hesitancy and abhorrence of proletarian violence and reverence for the parliamentary democracy by the Centre, nothing was done to prepare to take the complementary steps of the general strike and organise the insurrection.

This was the unpardonable crime of the Socialist Party leaders and of the social democrats for which the Italian working class have had to pay so dearly over the last ten years ; this is the lesson the working class in all countries must remember from the Italian experience.

In an Epilogue the author touchingly speaks of the failure of the Fascist *Experiment*, reiterates his faith in " Italy regaining her freedom," but how ? He is at a loss to say. He takes refuge in a platitude of " History showing . . . . that the crucifixion of thought is equivalent to its conquest. Such governments (Fascist) forget that the *people* can still have recourse to fire and sword."

A good social democrat he ignores the fact that the heroic Italian Communist Party of 1932 is even now within the citadel of Fascism, preparing the ground for that Spartacus (he talks about) that is to arise, and lead the Italian proletariat to victory over the Italian bourgeoisie and its social democratic and Fascist allies.

T.B.

POTEMKIN AND INVERGORDON.

Armed Cruiser Potemkin. By A. Matushenko. (Modern Books Ltd.) 28 pp. 6d.

MISSED chances and a few regrets were the feelings that assailed me when reading this epic of revolutionary struggle.

Matushenko's vivid description of the laying of the real foundation stone of Russian working class freedom, is devoid of all sentiment and wrappings, and is a living pulsating story which left a deep impression on my mind. Comparatively speaking, Invergordon cannot be placed in the same sphere, inasmuch as the Potemkin's struggle was on one ship, but more decisive in the action of the sailors.

There is one particular note of warning sounded throughout the whole story, and particularly in the words of Comrade Matushenko : " Some of the Potemkin's crew were so incautious as to believe the assurance of the good-natured sailors of the *George the Conqueror* that the P.O.'s on their ship were reliable." This had always been a predominant feature of my reasonings whilst in the Navy, and I noticed how cunningly a petty officer is segregated from the rank-and-file and encouraged in all the actions that the first part of his rank's name stands for. In the latter pages one reads how these same people are mainly responsible for the betrayal of the sailors. In the final stages we read of the lessons of the mutiny of the Potemkin, and in truth every one can be applied to Invergordon, without particular discrimination on any point.

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A feature which appears to me to have been very detrimental to the mutiny and its growth was the large number of committees set up on shore, which instead of being an assistance were a hindrance, and although the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was in direct contact with members of the crew the majority of the sailors were evidently confused by the mushroom growth of these committees. We at Invergordon had no contact with shore at all, and I doubt if many of the sailors knew of the existence of the Communist Party. In this respect our struggle was more pacifistic than militant.

Nevertheless, no one can deny that Comrade Matushenko has given to the working class a booklet of extreme importance and significance. He emphasises the enormous gulf between the industrial workers and the workers in uniform, showing how necessary it is for a closer collaboration between these two sections of the workers. Even when the body of Comrade Vahulinchuch was taken on shore, and tremendous crowds gathered, the opportunity for mass solidarity is allowed to pass.

In retrospect, let me state that in all revolts, the Navy has always broken the ice and made a pathway for the masses.

In the years to come, Potemkin will be of more than passing interest to the revolutionary movement and no one can afford to miss this book, written in the struggle of a comrade who played a wonderful part in the movement, and suffered so much in the struggle.

LEN. WINCOTT.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Religion of Scientists. Recent opinions of 200 Fellows of the Royal Society. (Benn.) 160 pp. 2s. 6d.

Money Power. By Fred Henderson. (Allen & Unwin.) 205 pp. 6s.

A New British Financial Policy. (Industry's Plan.) Report by F.B.I. 24 pp. 6d.

Unter dem Banner des Marxismus. Vo. 5, No. 3. December, 1931. Special Number on the 100th Anniversary of Hegel's Death. 148 pp. Rm. 1.

The Necessity of Communism. By J. Middleton Murry. (Johnathan Cape. 136 pp. 3s. 6d.

Industry and the Empire. F.B.I. 34 pp. 6d.

War and Revolution. Georges Valois. (Allen and Unwin.) 190 pp. 6s.

Soviet China. By M. James and R. Doonping. (Modern Books.) 31 pp. 6d.

Which Way for the Workers? A Report of the Debate between Harry Pollitt and Fenner Brockway. C. P. G. B. 2d.

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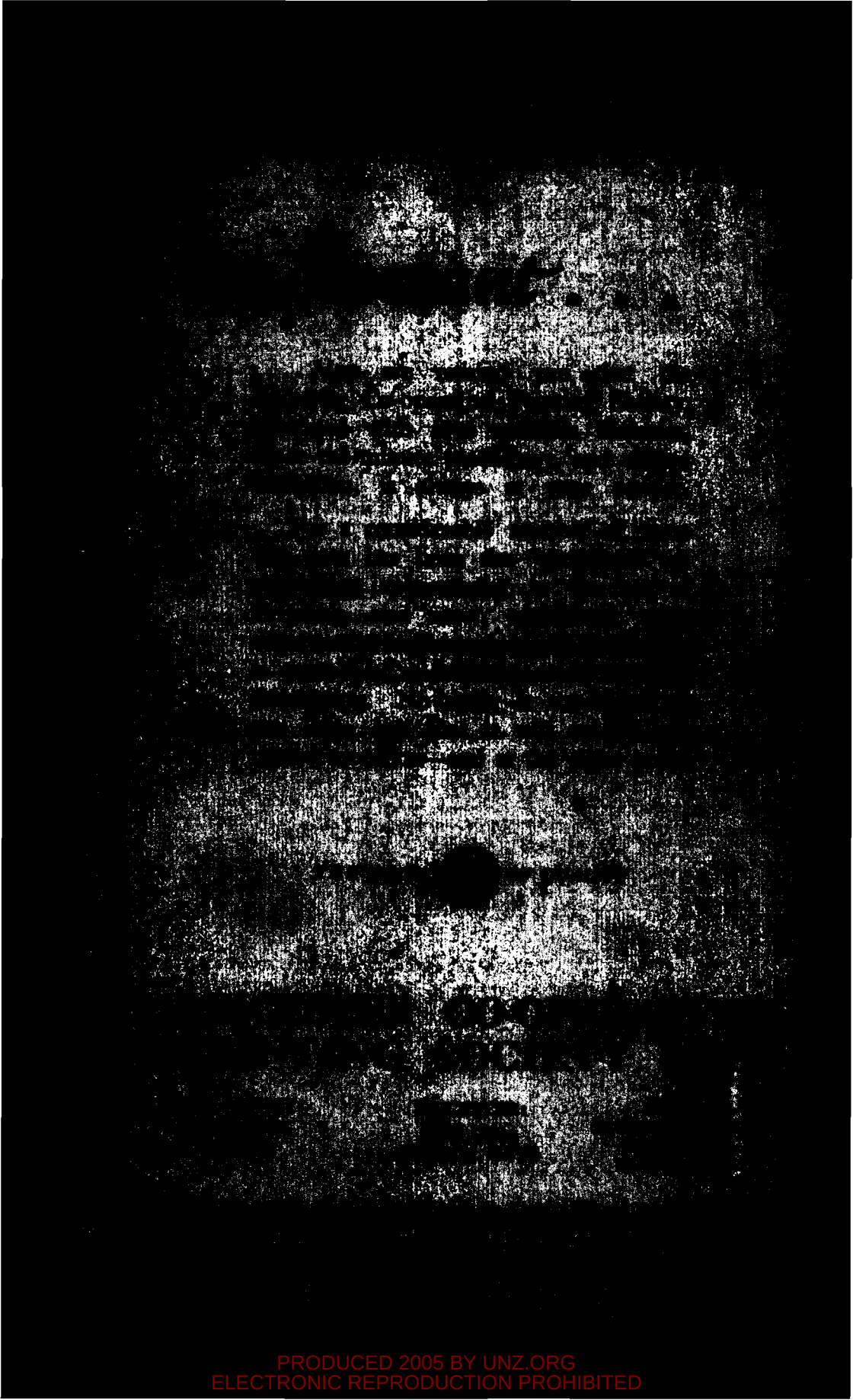

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